A Commentary on Prayer



Professor Muhsin Qaraati

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

A Commentary on Prayer

:Writer

Mohsin Qaraati

:Published in print

Affairs Department Ahl – al – Bayt (a) World Assembly

:Digital Publisher

Ghaemiyeh center of computerized researches

Contents

A Commentary on Prayer

BOOK ID

Author(s): Professor Muhsin Qaraati

Translator(s): Mansoor L. Limba

Publisher(s): Ahlul Bayt World Assembly

(Category: General Salaat (Ritual Prayer

Topic Tags: Prayer Salaat Worship Understanding Intention Miscellaneous information: ISBN: ۹۶۴-۵۲۹-۱۳۶-۴

point

This text explains in detail the meaning of Worship and Intention, as well as how different stages of worship are acquired. He then goes on to explain the different actions of Prayer in detail, such as the first Takbir, the recitation of the Suras

Publisher's Foreword

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

The invaluable legacy of the Household {Ahl al-Bayt} of the Prophet (may peace be upon them all), as preserved by their followers, is a comprehensive school of thought that embraces all branches of Islamic knowledge. This school has produced many .brilliant scholars who have drawn inspiration from this rich and pure resource

It has given many scholars to the Muslim ummah who, following in the footsteps of Imams of the Prophet's Household ('a), have done their best to clear up the doubts raised by various creeds and currents within and without Muslim society and to answer their questions. Throughout the past centuries, they have given well-.reasoned answers and clarifications concerning these questions and doubts

To meet the responsibilities assigned to it, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly (ABWA)

has embarked on a defence of the sanctity of the Islamic message and its verities, often obscured by the partisans of various sects and creeds as well as by currents hostile to Islam. The Assembly follows in the footsteps

p: ١

of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and the disciples of their school of thought in its readiness to confront these challenges and tries to be on the frontline in consonance with the .demands of every age

The arguments contained in the works of the scholars belonging to the School of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are of unique significance. That is because they are based on genuine scholarship and appeal to reason, and avoid prejudice and bias. These arguments address scholars and thinkers in a manner that appeals to healthy minds and .wholesome human nature

To assist the seekers of truth, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly has endeavored to present a new phase of these arguments contained in the studies and translations of the works of contemporary Shi‘ah writers and those who have embraced this sublime .school of thought through divine blessing

The Assembly is also engaged in edition and publication of the valuable works of leading Shi‘ah scholars of earlier ages to assist the seekers of the truth in discovering the truths which the School of the Prophet’s Household (‘a) has offered to the entire .world

The Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly looks forward to benefit from the opinions of the .readers and their suggestions and constructive criticism in this area

We also invite scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in propagating .(the genuine Islamic teachings as preached by the Prophet Muhammad (S

We beseech God, the Most High, to accept our humble efforts and to enable us to enhance them under the auspices of

.(Imam al-Mahdi, His vicegerent on the earth (may Allah expedite his advent

We express our gratitude to Hujjat al-Islam wa'l-Muslimin Shaykh Muhsin Qara'ati, the author of the present book, and Mansoor Limba, its translator. We also thank our colleagues who have participated in producing this work, especially the staff of the .Translation Office

Cultural Affairs Department

Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly

Foreword

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

The Cultural Center of Qur'anic Lessons was established in ۱۳۷۵ AHS (۱۹۹۶) with the aim of compiling, arranging and publishing the written, audio and visual works of .Hujjat al-Islam Shaykh Muhsin Qara'ati

During the many years of its activity, apart from publishing new books by the author, the Tafsir-e Nur {Commentary of Light} in particular, this institute has also presented .a book in its edited version, which had been published by other publishers

Among the works of the writer on the subject of prayer is the book, Tafsir-e Namaz {A Commentary on Prayer}, which was initially published by the Performance of Prayer Headquarters. Pursuant to the view of the honorable officials at the Headquarters, subsequent editions of the said book were supposed to be published .by the Cultural Center of Qur'anic Lessons

It is necessary to note that this book has been edited and earlier typographical errors have been corrected as far as possible. Nevertheless, we look forward to receiving the views and suggestions of our dear readers who we invite to communicate with us :at this address

Cultural Center of Qur’anic Lessons

P.O. Box

p: ۳

۱۴۱۸۵/۵۸۶

Tehran

Islamic Republic of Iran

Preface

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

أَلْحَمْدُ للهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ

وَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلىٰ سَيِّدِنَا وَ نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِهِ الطَّاهِرِيْنَ وَ لَعْنَهُ اللهِ عَلىٰ أَعْدَائِهِمْ أَجْمَعِيْنَ

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and may the blessings of Allah be upon our Master and Prophet, Muhammad, and his pure progeny, and may the curse of Allah be upon all their enemies.

I was glad to be present at the holy shrine of Imam ar-Rida (‘a) and to have started writing this booklet, the drafts of which I had prepared earlier, prior to the beginning of the (Iranian) New Year ۱۳۷۴ AHS (which commenced on March ۲۱, ۱۹۹۵).

In line with the efforts made after the {victory of the} Islamic Revolution in establishing the performance of Islamic prayer {salah} in schools, universities, military garrisons, and other public places, I also decided—after writing the books, Partu-ye az Asrar-e Namaz {Radiance of the Secrets of Prayer}, Hamrah ba Namaz {In the Company of Prayer} and Yeksad va Chahardah Nokteh Darbareh-ye Namaz {One Hundred and Fourteen Points about Prayer}—to write about a commentary on the recitals {adhkar} in prayer such as the takbir {recital of Allahu akbar at the beginning of the prayer} and the recital of Surah al-Fatihah and another surah, bowing down {ruku‘}, prostration {sujud}, tashahhud and salam so that we could

understand better what we are uttering to God in this regard, and have a conscious and gnostic involvement in the act

.of worship

Before embarking on the subject proper, let us first take a cursory glance at “Worship {‘ibadah} and Servitude {‘ubudiyyah}” which is the soul of prayer as well as all other .devotional duties so as to better internalize its sublime station in our lives

Muhsin Qara’ati

{Worship {‘ibadah} and Servitude {‘ubudiyyah

?{What is worship {‘ibadah

:Worship {‘ibadah} is the purpose behind our creation. The Qur’an states

(وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالإِنْسَ إِلا لِيَعْبُدُونِ)

(I did not create the jinn and humans except that they may worship Me.” (۱“

If the work we are doing is for the sake of seeking the pleasure of God, then it is an act of worship. It is so even though it may be a business or professional venture, the pursuit of knowledge, marriage, service to people, or anything that is meant to meet .our needs or that of society

That which makes an action an act of worship {‘ibadah} is the sacred motives behind its performance and in the parlance of the Qur’an, it has the “divine baptism” {sibghat (Allah}.(۲

{Natural disposition {fitrah} and worship {‘ibadah

Some of our actions or activities are based on worship {‘ibadah} while others are anchored in natural disposition {fitrah}. A habit can be meritorious such as sports or not meritorious such as smoking. But if an action was anchored in natural disposition

—that is, if it was done based on the natural disposition and pure mold which God has bestowed on the constitution of every human being—then it would always be .meritorious

The merit of natural disposition compared to worship is that time and

---

۱ - Surah adh-Dhariyat ۵۱:۵۶. In this volume, the translation of Qur'anic passages is adapted from Sayyid 'Ali Quli Qara'i, The Qur'an with a Phrase-by-Phrase English Translation (London: Islamic College for Advanced Studies Press, ۲۰۰۴). {Trans.}

۲ - Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۱۳۸: "The baptism of Allah {sibghat Allah}, and who baptizes better than Allah? And Him do we worship."

place, gender and race, and age and condition have no effect on it, and every human being, on account of his being a human, possesses it. An example of this is the affection given to one's child that is not true only to a particular generation and period rather, it is common for every parent to do so.(۱) Issues such as form and style of dress or food are governed by habit and they vary in different times and places. In some regions, a certain thing is a custom while the same is not regarded as such in .other places

Worship and devotion are also among those actions that pertain to the natural disposition of man, and thus, the most ancient, beautiful and durable buildings constructed by man are related to worship such as temples, churches, mosques, and .fire-temples

Of course, many differences can be seen with respect to forms and types of devotion. One difference pertains to the objects of worship extending from stone, wood and idols to the Beloved Lord, and another difference is in the form and style of worship, which varies from dancing and singing to the most profound and subtle litanies {munajat} of the awliya' {saints} of God.

The objective of the prophets ('a) has not been to create the spirit of devotion in man

.but rather to reform worship in terms of its object and form

The large sums of money spent on the construction of churches, synagogues, Hindu temples, and mosques; considering as sacred the

---

۱ - Question: If affection to one's child is indeed part of one's natural disposition {fitrah}, how is it that in some epochs such as the Pre-Islamic Period or Age of Ignorance {yawm al-jahiliyyah} some people used to bury their daughters alive? Reply: The issues pertaining to natural disposition {fitrah} are numerous. Just as affection for one's offspring is part of our natural disposition, regard for one's honor is also a part of it. The Arabs during the pre-Islamic period used to regard their daughters as a source of shame and ignominy as they would be taken captive during wars and had no productive power and economic earning. Thus, in a bid to preserve their honor and dignity, they used to dispose of their daughters. Love for wealth and love for life are both related to the natural disposition {fitri}. Some people sacrifice their lives for wealth while others do the opposite, i.e. sacrifice wealth for the sake of their lives. Therefore, sacrificing one's daughter for the sake of preserving one's honor is not inconsistent with the natural disposition of man, although it might be a .result of ignorance or confusion

national flags and heroes; and praising the excellences and values of individuals and .even objects are all manifestations of the spirit of devotion which exists in man

Even those who do not worship God worship their spouses, children, credentials, ideology, creed, or path and they are ready to move forward along this way even to the extent of sacrificing themselves. Worship has a deep natural root in man although :he may be unaware of it, as Mawlawi (ar-Rumi)(۱) says

همچو میل کوداکان با مادران

سرّ میل خود نداند در لبان

,Just like the children's fondness of their mothers

.He regards not the satisfaction of his desire in frankincense

God, the All-wise, has endowed man with all desires and instincts while also creating outside of man the means to satiate and meet these desires. If man ever becomes thirsty, water is created (to quench it), and if there is hunger, food also exists. If man is endowed with the sexual instinct, spouses have been created for him, and if the sense of smell is created, things to smell have been created too.

Among the profoundest feelings of man are the desire for eternity, love of perfection and the yearning for immortality. A relationship with God and worshipping Him guarantee the fulfillment of these natural inclinations. Prayer and worship are the relationships of man with the Fountainhead of Perfections, familiarity with the Real Beloved, and seeking refuge in the Eternal Power.

The Root of Worship

Who could recognize God with all His perpetual qualities and perfections without resorting to subservience and obeisance

---

١- Mawlawi: Jalal ad-Din ar-Rumi (١٢٠٧-١٢٧٣) was the greatest mystic poet in the Farsi language and founder of the Mawlawiyyah order of dervishes ("The Whirling Dervishes"). He is famous for his lyrics and for his didactic epic, Spiritual Couplets. {Trans.}

to Him? Through stories and historical accounts, the Qur'an expresses the signs of His power and grandeur.

It states that God gave a child to Maryam (Mary) without her having a husband; He split the Nile River for Musa (Moses) ('a)(١) and drowned Fir'awn (Pharoah) therein; He made the prophets ('a) victorious while being empty-handed, against the superpowers of their respective times, and rubbed the nose of the taghuts (٢) in the

(ground.(٣

It is He Who created you out of lifeless clay, and your life and death as well as honor {‘izzah} and humiliation {dhillah} are in His hand. Is there anyone who could perceive his own weakness, impotence, ignorance, and limitation as well as predictable and unpredictable perils and mishaps, but could not sense the need for the Power of ?Salvation and for him to submit to It

In various verses, the Qur’an reminds man of his weakness, saying: At the time of birth, you had no awareness of anything; you were utterly in a state of weakness .such that after acquiring strength, you shall also be heading toward weakness again

.In every moment, you are under the threat of different types of dangers

If the movement (both rotation and revolution) of the earth should slow down or ?should the day stand still, who could expedite its movement and change it

(قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مَعِينٍ)

Say, ‘Tell me, should your water sink down {into the ground}, who will bring you“ (running water?’”(٤

(لَوْ نَشَاءُ جَعَلْنَاهُ أُجَاجًا

The abbreviation, “‘a” stands for the Arabic invocative phrase, ‘alayhis-salam, - ١ ‘alayhimus-salam, or ‘alayhas-salam {may peace be upon him/them/her}, which is used after the names of the prophets, angels, Imams from the Prophet’s progeny, {.and saints (‘a). {Trans

The term taghut applies to any idol, object, or individual that prevents men from - ٢ doing what is good, and leads them astray. The term has been used eight times in the Qur’an. Prior to Islam, taghut had been the name of the one of the idols of the Quraysh tribe. This name is used also to mean the Satan. Moreover, the term is used to indicate one who rebels against lofty values, or who surpasses all bounds in his

despotism and tyranny and claims the prerogatives of divinity for himself whether {.explicitly or implicitly. {Trans

That is, God subjected the taghuts to the lowest ebb of humiliation and abjectness. -٣ {.{Trans

.Surah al-Mulk ۶٧:٣٠ -۴

فَلَوْلا تَشْكُرُونَ)

(If We wish We can make it (water) bitter. Then why do you not give thanks?"(١"

(لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ حُطَامًا فَظَلْتُمْ تَفَكَّهُونَ)

If We wish, We surely turn it (plant) into chaff, whereat you are left stunned (or" (regretful)."(٢

(إِنْ نَشَأْ نَخْسِفْ بِهِمُ الأرْضَ أَوْ نُسْقِطْ عَلَيْهِمْ كِسَفًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ)

If We like, We can make the earth swallow them, or let fall on them a fragment from" (the sky."(٣

The Qur'an mentions these and tens of other examples so as to take man out of his negligence, obliterate his pride and invite him toward worship and submissiveness to .the Creator

The profundity of worship

Worship is an act, which we outwardly consider as a type of humility, but it has deeper .profundity

Worship stems from the soul; it springs from gnosis {ma'rifah}; it emanates from cognition; it originates from piety {taqaddus}; it radiates from adoration; it derives from admiration; it comes from seeking refuge and assistance; and it arises from the .{love of the perfections {kamalat} of the Worshipped Being {ma'bud

Yes, worship is outwardly a simple act, but if it is other than the above, worship will not be entertained by man. Worship means emptying the heart of material things,

letting the spirit fly, and allowing the feet to make steps beyond the seeable and hearable things. Worship guarantees the love of man whose politeness in relation to his Lord is sometimes expressed through eulogy and adoration; at other times through glorification {tasbih} and sanctification {taqdis}; and yet at some other times, through

---

۱- Surah al-Waqi'ah ۵۶:۷۰.

۲- Surah al-Waqi'ah ۵۶:۶۵.

۳- Surah as-Saba' ۳۴:۹.

gratitude and gestures of submission.

Indifference toward worship

Hadrat(۱) 'Ali ('a) says:

قَرَّتْ إِذاً عينه إذا اقتَدى بعد السنين المتطاوله بالبهيمه الهامله و السائمه المرعيّه.

"May I get blind if after having passed so many years of my life (and with the possession of all talent, capabilities, facilities, intellect, knowledge, and inspiration), I now turn into an animal in human form!"

Yes, civilization, technology and the progress of new instruments have made life more comfortable, bestowing comfort and welfare as a gift (to us), but does the perfection of man lie in attaining such material comforts?

If this is so, then the animals are more advanced than man in food, clothing, habitation, and the satisfaction of carnal desire!

In terms of food, they eat better, are more comfortable, and have no need of cooking and preparation!

In terms of clothing, they have no need for sewing, washing and ironing!

.In terms of carnal desire, they satisfy it without difficulty and predicament

In procuring a place for habitation, there are so many birds and insects whose .technique in making nests and dens astonishes man

In essence, has this technological advancement brought about progress in our ?humanness as well

?Have individual and collective corruptions lessened

?Has this comfort also brought tranquility

In any case, just not placing the hand of man in that of the infallible and just leaders would be an injustice to humanity, if the heart of man is not linked to God, an insult .would have been made to the station of humanity

The pleasure of God as the axis of worship

Just as heavenly

{.Hadrat: The Arabic word Hadrat is used as a respectful form of address. {Trans -١

bodies and the earth always have a fixed axis though they make diverse rotations and revolutions, worship, with all its various forms and appearances, is also anchored in a fixed axis, which is the pleasure of God. This is in spite of the fact that spatial and temporal as well as individual and collective circumstances determine the type of .movement along this axis

For example, travel makes (a four-cycle {rak'ah}) prayer a two-rak'ah prayer; illness may necessitate changes in the form of the prayer. Yet, the two-rak'ah or shortened prayer is still a prayer and it is based on the axis of remembering God, seeking His :pleasure and performing His command

(وَأَقِمِ الصَّلاةَ لِذِكْرِی)

(And maintain the prayer for My remembrance."(1)"

The spirit of worship

Worship is the nourishment of the soul and the best food is that which is absorbed by the body. Similarly, the best act of worship is that which is internalized by the soul; that is, if it is performed with enthusiasm and presence of heart. Eating too much food is not beneficial. What is important is eating useful food.

:The Holy Prophet (S)(2) said to Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah al-Ansari

إِنَّ هٰذَا الدّينَ فَاوْغِل فيهِ بِرِفْقٍ وَلا تُبَغِّضُ إِلَىٰ نَفْسِك عِبادَهَ اللهِ.

Indeed this religion is firm. Therefore, act moderately in relation to it (and when you have no spiritual readiness for worship, do not impose it on yourself) so that the worship of Allah would not be detested by you.(3)

In another hadith, we also read that

.Surah Ta Ha ٢٠:١٤ -١

The abbreviation, "S", stands for the Arabic invocative phrase, sallallahu 'alayhi wa -٢ alihi wa sallam {may God's salutation and peace be upon him and his progeny}, which {.is used after the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S). {Trans

.Bihar al-Anwar vol. ٧١, p. ٢١٢ -٣

:the Holy Prophet (S) said

طُوبىٰ لِمَنْ عَشِقَ الْعِبادَهَ وَ عانَقَها.

(Blessed is he who loves worship and is always fond of it."(1)"

Moderation in worship

The spirit of worship and devotion remains alive when man is moderate in its performance. This has been narrated in the books of hadith under the heading, bab

(al-iqtisad fi'l-'ibadah {section on moderation in worship}.(۲

Man is healthy when there is proportionality in his bodily limbs, and if a certain body member is bigger or smaller than the normal size, it is considered deformed (or defective in general). In spiritual affairs, man should also harmoniously nurture all .that is valuable in himself

It was reported to the Holy Prophet (S) that under the pretext of worship, a group of his ummah {community} had abandoned their spouses and children and had secluded themselves in the mosque. The Prophet stated in a loud voice: "This is not my way and method. I myself am living with my spouses and reside in my house. Anyone who acts (contrary to this does not belong to me."(۳

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) narrates the story of a Muslim who had a Christian neighbor that embraced Islam. That Muslim had awakened the former Christian during the first dawn (prior to the time for the dawn prayer {salah as-subh}), brought him to the mosque and said to him: "Perform your supererogatory night prayers {tahajjud} till the time for the dawn prayer and thereafter, engage in supplication {du'a'} till the .sunrise

Then, read the Qur'an up to

.Bihar al-Anwar vol. ۷۱, p. ۲۱۲ -۱

.Al-Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۸۶ -۲

.Al-Kafi, vol. ۵, p. ۴۹۶ -۳

the time for the noon prayer {salah az-zuhr}." In this manner, the Muslim urged the former Christian to engage in prayer, recital of the Qur'an and supplication day and night. When the new Muslim returned home, he abandoned Islam and did not go to (the mosque anymore.(۱

.Yes, such extremism and lack of moderation in worship will drive people away

The martyred professor, Murtada Mutahhari,(۲) narrates that ‘Amru ibn al-‘As had two sons. One was a votary of Hadrat ‘Ali (‘a) while the other was a supporter of Mu‘awiyah. One day, the Prophet (S) said to the good son of ‘Amru ibn al-‘As (named ‘Abd Allah): “I have heard that you spend your night in worship and your day in fasting.” He said: “Yes, O Messenger of Allah.” The Prophet (S) said: “This way is not acceptable to me.”(۳)

We read in the traditions:

إِنَّ لِلْقُلُوبِ إِقْبالاً وَ إِدْباراً.

“Indeed, there is inclination and disinclination in the heart (of man).”(۴)

You have to take advantage of wherever it inclines and leans to. And whenever it is not ready, do not exert pressure on it otherwise it will unconsciously show a negative reaction.

In the Islamic instructions it is mentioned that you have to divide your time into four parts, and allot time for entertainment and enjoyment, for if you do so, you will also have enthusiasm for other activities.(۵)

The Holy Qur’an gives the title of “violators” to the Jews who engaged in work and went fishing during the Sabbath Day:

)

۱- Murtada Mutahhari, Sayri dar Sireh-ye Nabawi {A Survey of the Life Conduct of the Prophet (S)}, p. ۲۱۳.

۲- Ayatullah Murtada Mutahhari (۱۲۹۸-۱۳۵۸ AHS) was a scholar of unusually wide learning, a prolific writer, eloquent speaker, lecturer, and a cherished student of Imam Khomeini. He was a leading member of the Revolutionary Council until his assassination on May ۱, ۱۹۷۹ by the terrorist Furqan group. {Trans.}

۳- Murtada Mutahhari, Taharat-e Ruh {Spiritual Purification}, p. ۱۲۲.

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۸, p. ۳۵۷ -۴

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۱۴, p. ۴۱ -۵

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ اعْتَدَوْا مِنْكُمْ فِى السَّبْتِ)

(And certainly you know those of you who violated the Sabbath."(۱)"

In any case, keeping zeal and ardor in worship is a principle which comes into being .through moderation

Management in worship

Management is confined not only to social, political and economic issues. In fact, .devotional affairs are also in need of management

The principles discussed in management are: Planning and work design; selection of an efficient workforce; discipline and supervision; encouragement and control and the like. In the domain of worship, these principles should also be observed in order to .engender advancement and perfection

Prayer has a specific design; it starts with takbir {utterance of Allahu akbar} and ends with salam or taslim {salutation}. Its number of rak'ahs {cycles}, ruku' {bowing down} and sujud {prostration} is specified. Its time of performance is determined and .{its direction is toward the qiblah {the Ka'bah in Mecca

The mere design, however, is not enough. Its performance also necessitates the selection of a competent and socially oriented congregational prayer leader {imam}. Through good manners, morality, supervision, and enthusiasm, the people .encouraged and persuaded to perform prayer and attend the mosque

Order and arrangement in the lines of the congregation as well as in following the Imam should be observed. In any case, it requires perfect management for it to be .conducted in the best possible manner

Worship as a ۲۴-hour pharmacy

Anyone can have communion with God at any time, under any circumstance, and without any prior arrangement and mediation. Although special times such as the ,time of dawn

---

.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۶۵ -۱

sunset on Friday, after the deliverance of the Friday prayer sermons, when it is raining, and the Night of Power {layla al-qadr}(۱) have particular importance for supplication {du'a'} and worship {'ibadah}, supplication and devotion are not .confined to these periods

Worship, at any rate, is the medicine for negligence, oblivion and disobedience: "And maintain the prayer for My remembrance."(۲) It is the source of tranquility and serenity and the effacer of anxieties and worries—"Look! The hearts find rest in (Allah's remembrance!"(۳

Worship as the source of tranquility

You know of ruffian taghuts, big capitalists, and possessors of knowledge, industry and technology, but do you know anyone among them who has peace of mind and ?tranquility of heart

?Do Western societies today have peace of mind and tranquility of heart

Have the possession of power, industry and wealth brought about serenity, ?friendship, tranquility, and peace of mind

Yet, worship and obedience to God bring about such a state for the saints of God that under no circumstance whatsoever would they experience anxiety. At this juncture, it is appropriate for me to narrate two recollections of the Great Leader of the Islamic (Revolution, Imam Khomeini (q):(۴

After the escape of the Shah from Iran, even though his subservient puppet, Shapur

Bakhtiyar was ruling, Imam Khomeini decided to return to his country after ۱۴ years in exile. A reporter in the airplane asked him: "What do you feel now?" He replied: "!"Nothing

This is while millions of enthusiastic Iranians were worrying for the safety of the Imam. Having peace of mind, the Imam was

---

۱ - The Night of Power (or Decree), has a very special significance in the Muslim calendar because it is the anniversary of that night when the Qur'an was first revealed to Prophet Muhammad. This night has been described as 'better than a thousand months', and tradition holds that requests made to God during Laylat al-{.Qadr will be granted. {Trans

۲- ۲۰:۱۴ Surah Ta Ha.

۳- ۱۳:۲۸ Surah al-Ra'd.

۴- The abbreviation, "q" stands for the Arabic invocative phrase, quddisa sirruh {may {.his soul be sanctified}, which is used after the names of pious people. {Trans

.busy in the night supererogatory prayers and remembrance of God

.This tranquility was only because of his constant remembrance of Him

The other recollection, which I heard from the son of the Imam, the late Hajj Sayyid Ahmad Khomeini, is this: "On the day of the Shah's escape from Iran, tens of reporters and photo journalists from around the world gathered in the house of the Imam in Paris in order to relay his speeches to the world. The Imam stood on a chair and .uttered a few statements

Then, he turned to me and asked: 'Ahmad, has the time for the noon prayer {salah az-zuhr} arrived?' I said: 'Yes.' Without any delay, the Imam concluded his speech and came down from the chair for the performance of prayer at its initial (and best) time. All were perplexed as to what had happened. I said: 'The Imam performs his ".'prayer on time

What the Imam did in Paris was a lesson he had learned from his leader, Imam ar-Rida (‘a). It has been recorded in history that the chief of the group of Sabeans, a group that has been mentioned in the Qur’an,(۱) was an arrogant and fanatic scholar.

Whenever he would sit down in a dialogue with Imam ar-Rida (‘a), he would not surrender and concede until when, during a certain intricate discussion, his mind became so confused that he said: “Now, my heart has softened and I accepted your logic.” At that time, the call to prayer {adhan} was recited.

۱- See Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۶۲; Surah an-Nisa’ ۴:۶۹; Surah al-Hajj ۲۲:۱۷. {Tans.}

Imam ar-Rida (‘a) left the assembly in order to pray.

Although the companions of the Imam (‘a) insisted that if he continued the discussion for some moments, the chief of the Sabeans and all his followers would become Muslims, he (‘a) said: “To perform the prayer at its earliest (and best) time is more important than discussion. If he really deserves it, he can also accept the truth after the prayer. The Sabean scholar, who saw this dignity, decisiveness, obedience and love for the truth in the Imam (‘a), became more interested.(۱)

Worship and acquisitions

Worship is a means to acquire divine help and graces.

(وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّکَ حَتَّی یَأْتِیکَ الْیَقِینُ)

“And worship you Lord until certainty (or death) comes to you.”(۲)

Hadrat Musa (Moses) (‘a) engaged in worship and litanies for ۴۰ days and nights on the Mount of Tur for the acquisition of the heavenly book, Tawrah (Torah). The Holy Prophet of Islam (S) was busy in the performance of acts of worship in the cave of Hira for a long time before the acquisition of divine revelation. It is thus stated in the traditions:

مَنْ اَخْلَصَ الْعِبادَه لِلهِ اَرْبَعینَ صَباحاً ظَهَرتْ یَنابیعُ الْحِکْمَه مِنْ قَلْبِهِ عَلیٰ لِسانِهِ.

"He who sincerely worships Allah for forty days, springs of wisdom shall appear from his heart to his tongue."(3)

Yes, sincere worship is an academy that trains in the course of forty days the sage who would acquire wisdom from the divine fountain and share it with others.

The reciprocal effects of faith and worship

Just as faith draws man toward worship,

p: 17

1- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 49, p. 175.
2- Surah al-Hijr 15:99.
3- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 53, p. 326.

worship is also effective in strengthening faith. Their similitude is that of a root which delivers water and food to the branches, and in turn, the branches transfer heat and light to the root. Yes, whenever worship improves and increases, man's enthusiasm toward the Object of Worship is also enhanced.

The philosophy of worship according to the Qur'an

The Qur'an regards the remembrance of God as the philosophy of prayer:

"And maintain the prayer for My remembrance."(1)

And the remembrance of God is the source of tranquility of the heart:

"Look! The hearts find rest in Allah's remembrance!"(2)

And the consequence of tranquility of the heart is soaring to the celestial realm:

"O soul at peace! Return to your Lord!"(3)

:In other cases, the Qur’an considers gratitude to God as the reason behind worship

(اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذى خَلَقَكُمْ)

(Worship you Lord, who created you.”(۴“

(فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هذَا الْبَيْتِ الَّذى أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَ آمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ)

Let them worship the Lord of this House, who has fed them {and saved them} from“ (hunger, and secured them from fear.”(۵

:In some verses, the educational function of prayer has been pointed out

(إِنَّ الصَّلاةَ تَنْهى عَنِ الْفَحْشاءِ وَ الْمُنْكَرِ)

(Indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs.”(۶“

For the sake of the authenticity or acceptance of prayer, the performer of prayer has no option but to observe the religious precepts as a whole, the observance of which is itself a strong foundation for abstaining from sin and indecency. Yes, anyone who would wear a white garment will naturally not sit

---

.Surah Ta Ha ۲۰:۱۴ -۱

.Surah al-Ra‘d ۱۳:۲۸ -۲

.Surah al-Fajr ۸۹:۲۷-۲۸ -۳

.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۲۱ -۴

.Surah al-Quraysh ۱۰۶:۳-۴ -۵

.Surah al-‘Ankabut ۲۹:۴۵ -۶

.on a dirty and polluted ground

:After enjoining prayer, the Qur’an states

(إِنَّ الْحَسَناتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئاتِ)

(Indeed good deeds efface misdeeds."(1"

Thus, prayer is a practical repentance for past sins, and through this verse, God gives hope to the sinner that if he would perform meritorious acts such as prayer and worship, his misdeeds will be erased.

Prayer in the words of Imam 'Ali ('a)

Hadrat 'Ali's ('a) many references to prayer and the remembrance of God as recorded in Nahj al-Balaghah(2) have been compiled in a book entitled, Namaz dar Nahj al-Balagheh {Prayer in Nahj al-Balaghah}. Here, I shall quote a statement of the Imam ('a) concerning the philosophy of glorification and the remembrance of God whose most important manifestation is prayer:

اِنَّ الله عَزَّ وَ جَلّ جَعَلَ الذِّکْرَ جَلاءً لِلْقُلُوبِ تَسْمَعُ بِهِ بَعْدَ الْوَقْره وَ تُبْصِرُ بِه بَعْدَ الْعَشوه.

Certainly, Allah, the Glorified, the Sublime, has made His remembrance the light for hearts which hear with its help despite deafness, see with its help despite blindness and become submissive with its help despite unruliness.(3)

Then, concerning the blessings of prayer, the Imam ('a) said:

قَدْ حَفَّتْ بِهِم الْمَلائِکَه وَ نُزِّلَتْ عَلَیهِمُ السَّکینَه وَ فُتِحَتْ لَهُم اَبْوابَ السَّماءِ وَ اُعِدَّتْ لَهُم مَقاعِدَ الکِرامات.

The angels have surrounded them (performers of prayer) and peace is showered upon them. The doors of heaven are opened for them and abodes of blessedness, of which He had informed them, have been prepared for them.(4)

In another sermon, the Imam ('a) says:

وَ انَّها لَتَحُتُّ الذُّنُوبَ حَتَّ الْوَرَق وَ تُطلِقُها اِطْلاقَ الرَّبَق.

"Certainly, prayer removes sins like autumn strips leaves off from trees,

1- Surah Hud 11:114.

Nahj al-Balaghah (The Peak of Eloquence) is a collection of speeches, sayings and -۲ letters of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) compiled by Sharif ar-Radi Muhammad ibn al-Husayn (d. ۴۰۶ AH/۱۰۱۶). The contents of the book concern the three essential topics of God, man and the universe, and include comments on scientific, literary, social, ethical, and political issues. With the exception of the words of the Glorious Qur'an and of the Holy Prophet (S), no words of man can equal it in eloquence. So far, more than ۱۰۱ exegeses have been written on the Nahj al-Balaghah, indicating the importance of this treatise to scholars and learned men of research and investigation. For more information, visit: http://www.al-islam.org/nahjul {.[۱۳]. {Trans

.Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon ۲۲۲ -۳

.Ibid -۴

(and it liberates you from the rope (of sins) tied around your neck."(۱)

:(In continuation, he narrates an interesting comparison from the Holy Prophet (S

Prayer is like a hot spring situated at someone's door. If he takes a bath in it five" (times a day, will then any dirt remain on him?"(۲)

In Sermon ۱۹۶, the Imam ('a) enumerates some of the moral vices such as pride {kibr}, disobedience and oppression {zulm}, and then he ('a) says: "It is on account of these perils that God has encouraged His believing servants to perform salah and zakah,(۳) to fast during the days when it is made obligatory." Then, concerning the :effects of prayer, he ('a) says

تَسْكيناً لاَطْرافِهِم، تَخْشِيعاً لاَبْصارِهِم، تَذْليلاً لِنُفوسِهِمْ تَخْفِيضاً، لِقُلُوبِهِم، اِزالَةً لِلْخَيْلاءِ عَنْهُم اِنْ اَوْ حَشَتْهُم الْوَحْشَه آنَسَهُمْ ذِكْرَك.

This act of worship} gives their (God's believing servants') limbs peace and rest,} casts fear in their eyes, softens their spirits, cultivates a sense of humility in their hearts and purges them from pride. At the time of fear, anxiety and loneliness, (remembrance of You gives them enthusiasm and intimacy.(۴)

Of course, it is obvious that everyone does not receive such benefits from prayer; rather, it is only that group which is enamored by prayer and the remembrance of .God. This group will not exchange them for the entire world

The effects and blessings of servitude and submission

Sense of honor and esteem .۱

:{Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (ʻa) says in his litanies {munajat

إِلٰهِی کَفٰی بِی عِزّاً أَنْ أَکُوْنَ لَکَ عَبْداً.

O Lord! It is already enough of an honor for me that I am"

.Ibid., Sermon ۱۹۹ -۱

.Ibid -۲

Zakah: the tax levied on various categories of wealth and spent on the purposes -۳ {.specified in Surah at-Tawbah ۹:۶۰. {Trans

.Ibid., Sermon ۱۹۶ -۴

(Your servant."(۱

Which honor is more sublime than that man could talk to his Creator and He in turn !?would listen to the words of man and grant them

In this fleeting world, if a person speaks with a scholar or a great man, he feels a sense of honor because of his presence and the opportunity to be in conversation with him, and that a person who was once a student of a certain distinguished .professor also gives him self-esteem

Sense of strength .۲

So long as a child is holding the hand of his strong and kind father, he feels a sense of strength, but if he is alone, he experiences fear and apprehension lest others

.annoyed him

A person who is linked to God feels a sense of strength vis-à-vis the superpowers, .(taghuts and arrogant (powers

Sense of dignity .۳

Dignity {'izzah} means not to come under the influence of others. In the school {maktab} of the prophets {anbiya'} ('a), all dignity belongs to God just as all power belongs to Him. Thus, the Qur'an criticizes those who incline to other than God, saying: ("Do you want dignity from other than God?"(۲

It is natural that linking with the Absolute Beloved and Eternal Power gives dignity to man, just as words such as "Allahu akbar" {Allah is greater} humiliate the taghuts in .the eyes of man and make him dignified in comparison to them

So, the Qur'an orders us to seek power and strength from prayer and worship when :we face difficulties and adversities

(وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَوٰةِ)

And take recourse in patience"

p: ۲۱

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۷, p. ۴۰۲ -۱

Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۱۳۹: "Those who take the faithless for allies instead of the faithful— -۲ ".do they seek honor with them? {If so,} indeed all honor belongs to Allah

(and prayer."(۱

During critical moments, the saints of God also used to strengthen themselves through prayer. On the afternoon of the ninth day of Muharram in Karbala', the army of Yazid made an assault on the camp of Imam al-Husayn ('a). The Imam ('a) said: "Postpone the battle for one night as I am fond of prayer and I would like to engage in (worship tonight till morning."(۲

The righteous servants of God are not only fond of the obligatory {wajib} prayers but also of the recommended {mustahab} prayers. The recommended prayer is a sign of fondness for prayer. There are many people who perform the obligatory prayers due to fear of divine wrath for missing them. With respect to the recommended prayer, .however, love rather than fear is not the issue

Yes, anyone who loves somebody likes to talk with him more and does not want to separate from him. How could man claim that he loves God when he has no !?enthusiasm for speaking with Him

Of course, this distaste for prayer and recommended acts is not without reason. In fact, according to the traditions, sins take away the opportunity for the night and (dawn supererogatory prayers.(۳

In any case, the one who does not perform the optional prayers is not worthy of expecting virtues from God, just like someone who is waiting for the advent of the Reformer {muslih} (Imam al-Mahdi ('a)) while he himself is not reformed or righteous .{{salih

The recommended prayers also compensate for the defects and shortcomings

---

.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۴۵ -۱

.Maqtal ash-Shams, p. ۱۷۹ -۲

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۳, p. ۱۲۷ -۳

of the obligatory prayers.(۱) A certain person asked the Imam ('a): "My heart is not in my prayer and I do not benefit from the blessings of prayer. What should I do?" The Imam ('a) said: "After the obligatory prayers, perform the optional prayers as they compensate for the shortcomings of the former and lead to the acceptance of the ".obligatory prayers

It is on account of these effects and blessings that the saints of God paid much

attention not only to the obligatory prayers but also to the optional prayers, and they used to keep aloof from those things that obstruct and disturb this religious wayfaring and spiritual ascension such as excessive eating, excessive talking, excessive sleeping, eating unlawful or unlawfully earned food, debauchery, and worldly engagements, which keep man away from worship and make prayer heavy for him. :As the Qur'an says

(وَ إِنَّها لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلاّ عَلَى الْخاشِعِينَ)

(And it (prayer) is indeed hard except for the humble."(۲"

Training agent .۴

Although prayer is spiritual and religious communion whose aim is the remembrance of God, Islam seeks to implement this spirit (of communion) under the framework of a set of educative programs, and thus, it has set many requirements for it—i.e. requirements for the correctness of the prayer, requirements for its acceptance and .requirements for its perfection

Cleanliness of the body and clothing, facing the qiblah, correct recital of the words, permissibility {mubah} of the place and clothing of the performer of prayer are some ,of the factors necessary for the correctness of prayer

---

.Tafsir Atib al-Bayan, vol. ۱, p. ۱۶۱ -۱

.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۴۵ -۲

.which are related to the body of the performer and not his soul

However, Islam has framed this prayer in this manner so as to give lessons to the Muslims about hygiene, cleanliness, independence, and the observance of the rights .of others

Just like concentration, complete devotion, acceptance of the leadership of the

infallible Imams ('a) and payment of those financial obligations such as khums(1) and zakat are requirements for the acceptance of prayer, so too are the performance of prayer at its earliest time, in the mosque and in congregation, that the performer of the prayer wears clean garments, applies perfume, brushes his teeth, and observes the order of the lines and the like are among the requirements for the perfection of .prayer

A keen scrutiny of these requisites makes it clear that each one of them plays a key .role in training human beings

:Whichever direction we stand in prayer is toward God, as the Qur'an states

(فَأَيْنَما تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللّهِ)

(So whichever way you turn, there is the face of Allah!"(2"

However, in order for Muslim society to understand that it must have a single direction and learn the lesson of unity and solidarity, everyone is ordered to face a ?single direction. But why is that direction toward the Ka'bah

It is because the Ka'bah is the first place to have been selected as a place for the :worship of mankind

(إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنّاسِ لَلَّذى بِبَكَّهَ مُبارَكًا وَ هُدًى لِلْعالَمينَ)

Indeed the first house to"

Khums: literally means one-fifth. According to the Shi'ah school of jurisprudence - ١ {fiqh}, this one-fifth tax is obligatorily levied on every adult Muslim who is financially secure and has surplus in his income out of annual savings, net commercial profits, and all movable and immovable properties which are not commensurable with the needs and social standing of the person. Khums is divided into two equal parts: the Share of the Imam {sahm al-Imam} and the Share of the Sayyids/Sadat (descendants

of the Prophet) {sahm as-Sadat}. Accordingly, the Share of the Imam is to be paid to the living Imam, and in the period of Occultation, to the most learned living mujtahid who is the giver's marja' at-taqlid {Source of Emulation}. The other half of the khums, the Share of the Sayyids/Sadat, is to be given to needy pious Sayyids who lack the resources for one's year respectable living in consonance with their various statuses. For more information, see Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi, Khums: An Islamic Tax, [http://www.al-islam.org/beliefs/practices/khums.html] ۱۴.

۲- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۱۱۵.

be set up for mankind is the one at Bakkah,(۱) blessed and a guidance for all nations."(۲)

On one hand, the founder and custodians of the Ka'bah throughout history have been prophets ('a). Thus, standing facing the Ka'bah is a sort of ideological solidarity throughout the ages.

On the other hand, the Ka'bah is the source of independence. It is because when the Muslims were still facing the Bayt al-Muqaddas, the qiblah of the Jews and Christians, the latter taunted the former, saying: "You are standing while facing our qiblah; why do you have no independence?" The Qur'an thus states with utmost explicitness:

(فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرامِ وَ حَيْثُ ما كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ)

"Turn your face toward the Holy Mosque, and wherever you may be, turn your faces toward it, so that the people may have no argument against you."(۳)

In sum, the Ka'bah is the source of independence, unity and solidarity, and these are the educative lessons of prayer.

۵. Summoning up spirits!

The market for hypnotism and summoning up spirits has flourished nowadays in the world, but our point is not those things. Our point is that we have to summon up our runaway soul toward the Creator through prayer and let this truant pupil be present in class. One of the blessings of prayer is the summoning up of the rebellious and

runaway soul to the Presence of God.

In the Munajat ash-Shakkin, Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin (‘a) complains in the Presence of God against his own soul,

p: ۲۵

۱- Bakkah: the Holy Mosque or the city of Mecca, or the territory where they stand. {Q. Trans.}

۲- Surah Al ‘Imran ۳:۹۶.

۳- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۱۵۰.

saying: “O God! I am complaining to You against a soul which is inclined toward carnal desires and is escaping from the truth.”

It is this soul that considers sin to be sweet and light to man, justifying it thus: “You will repent afterward anyway,” or “Others have also done these deeds.” The soul is like a wanton child. If his father is not watchful of him, he will separate from his father and go wherever he wants, and in every moment he is susceptible to every kind of danger.

The best way of controlling this rebellious soul is for man to summon it several times a day to the Presence of God and thereby remove its negligence and save it from drowning in the quagmire of material things.

۶. Guardianship {wilayah} over creation!

Among the blessings of prayer and worship is that gradually man acquires dominance over the universe.

First step: The Qur’an says:

(إِنْ تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ فُرْقانًا)

“If you are wary of Allah, He shall appoint a criterion(۱) for you.”(۲)

In another place, it states:

(يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ نُوراً تَمْشُونَ بِهِ)

"And give you a light to walk by."(3)

So, God-wariness {taqwa}—the most important aspect of which is servitude to God and prayer—is a step toward the acquisition of light {nur} and insight {basirah}.

Second step: Those who accept divine guidance and are within the orbit of truth, God will enhance the guidance they possess:

(وَ الَّذينَ اهْتَدَوْا زادَهُمْ هُدًى)

"As for those who are {rightly} guided, He enhances their guidance."(4)

Hence, their light and guidance shall not

۱- That is, a knowledge which will enable you to distinguish between truth and falsehood. {Q Trans.}

۲- Surah al-Anfal ۸:۲۹.

۳- Surah al-Hadid ۵۷:۲۸.

۴- Surah Muhammad ۴۷:۱۷.

cease; rather, on account of the submission and servitude, they are always in a state of advancement and proximity {qurb} (to God), and the radiance of their existence shines brighter.

Third step: Since these individuals are exerting effort in the way of God, God will show them many paths leading toward perfection:

(وَ الَّذينَ جاهَدُوا فينا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنا)

"As for those who strive in Us, We shall surely guide them in Our ways."(1)

Fourth step: Whenever Satan makes an insinuation to them, they will immediately be

:reminded and ask forgiveness from Allah

(إِذا مَسَّهُمْ طائِفٌ مِنَ الشَّيْطانِ تَذَكَّرُوا)

When those who are God-wary are touched by a visitation (or insinuation) of Satan,“ (they remember {Allah}.”(٢)

Fifth step: Prayer is the best means for self-building and keeping aloof from indecency :and evil

(إِنَّ الصَّلاةَ تَنْهى عَنِ الْفَحْشاءِ وَ الْمُنْكَرِ)

(Indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs.”(٣“

After following these steps, man will acquire dominance over his soul. He harnesses it and will not be entangled by insinuations and desires. As a matter of fact, whenever the pressure of inner insinuation {waswasah} and outer taghut is intensified, he will :again seek assistance through prayer and patience

(وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَوٰةِ)

(And take recourse in patience and prayer.”(۴“

Sixth step: God-wary {muttaqi} individuals, whose existence is illuminated with the divine light move a step forward with every prayer, for prayer is not repetition; it is an ascension. The stairs of a ladder are all similar, but every stair brings man to a higher stage. It is like someone

---

١- Surah ‘Ankabut ٢٩:۶٩.
٢- Surah al-A‘raf ٧:٢٠١.
٣- Surah al-‘Ankabut ٢٩:۴۵.
۴- Surah al-Baqarah ٢:۴۵.

who digs a well. Apparently, he is doing a repetitive task and is always digging, but in

.reality, with every strike that he makes, his well is becoming deeper

The rak'ahs {cycles} of prayer are apparently repetitive, but in reality, they are stairs in climbing the ladder of perfection and for deepening gnosis {ma'rifah} and faith .{{iman

The performer of prayer does not allow his life to become a grazing land for Satan or to be dominated by him. In the Du'a' Makarim al-Akhlaq, Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) "!asks this from God: "O Lord! If my life is a meadow for Satan, terminate it

Satan not only gives illusion and fancy but also crushes the soul of man under his feet .and makes man negligent of the truth and the reality

Yes, the Holy Prophet (S) was awake even when he was asleep whereas we are asleep while awake and even while we are praying our souls are the victims of Satan :and the imagination. As Mawlawi says

گفت پیغمبر که عَینایَ ینام

لا ینام القلب عن ربّ الاَنام

چشم تو بیدار و دل رفته به خواب

چشم من خفته، دلم در فتح باب

The Prophet said, "My two eyes are asleep while my heart doesn't sleep and forget .the Lord of the creatures

Your eyes are awake and the heart fell asleep. My eyes are asleep while my heart is ".looking for the opening door

:In another place, he says

گفت پیغمبر که دل، همچون پری است

در بیابانی اسیر صَرصری است

باد، پَر را هر طرف رانَد گزاف

گه

p: ۲۸

چپ و گه راست با صد اختلاف

The Prophet said that the heart is like a feather, which is captured in a desert by a wind.

The wind shoots away the feather to every corner vainly. Sometimes to the left and sometimes to the right with a hundred difference.

If this soul is not bridled, every moment it can draw man toward corruption:

(إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلاّ ما رَحِمَ رَبّی)

"For the {carnal} soul indeed prompts {men} to evil, except inasmuch as my Lord has mercy."(۱)

For this reason, the Qur'an regards paradise as exclusive for those who have no desire for dominance and corruption not only in words but also in the heart.(۲) And for those who prevent their souls from following their desires, paradise shall be their abode.(۳)

The saints of God are the rulers {hukama'} over their minds and thoughts and not condemned {mahkumin} by them. As a result of their servitude to God, they have such guardianship {wilayah} and dominance {sultah} over their souls that they do not allow even an insinuation {waswasah} to enter their hearts.

من چو مرغ اوجم، اندیشه مگس

کی بود بر من مگس را دسترس

I am like a bird, He is like Jamshid, and the thought over the fly.

?When can I have access over the fly

After man attains light, cognition and awareness; controls the soul through gnostic, zealous and conscious prayers; sets his soul toward the pleasure of God; and acquires guardianship and dominance over his soul, he will also acquire dominance over creation. His supplications

---

.Surah Yusuf ۱۲:۵۳ -۱

Surah al-Qasas ۲۸:۸۳: "This is the abode of the Hereafter which We shall grant to -۲ those who do not desire to domineer in the earth nor to cause corruption, and the ".outcome will be in favor of the God-wary

Surah an-Nazi'at ۷۹:۴۰-۴۱: "But as for him who is awed to stand before his Lord and -۳ ".forbids the soul from {following} desire, his refuge will indeed be paradise

.will be effective and he can perform divine works

The miracles of the prophets ('a) are the same authority over creation and mastery .over nature, which they performed with divine permission

:They are thus saying

العُبوديّهُ جُوهِره كُنهها الرّبوبيّه.

".{Servitude {'ubudiyyah} is a gem that brings about lordship {rububiyyah"

.It refers to the dominance over the creation which results from servitude to God

:It is recorded in the hadith that God says

Through optional and recommended acts, man gets nearer to Me step by step until" such a time that he becomes My beloved {mahbub} and once he attains this station, I will become his eyes, ears, tongue, and hand, and all his actions will become divine and purposeful. He will reach a point where like Hadrat Ibrahim (Abraham) ('a), he will :say

(إِنَّ صَلاتی وَ نُسُکی وَ مَحْیایَ وَ مَماتی لِلّهِ رَبّ ِ الْعالَمینَ)

Indeed my prayer and my worship, my life and my death are for the sake of Allah, the“ (Lord of all the worlds.”(۱

The visage of prayer

Whatever can be said and written about prayer would still not be enough to fully describe it. How could it be possible to express in a few words the pillar of religion, the banner of Islam, the reminiscence of religions and prophets, and the pivot of the ?acceptance of all deeds

Prayer is the program for every morning and evening. In the morning the first • obligatory word is prayer and in the evening the last obligation is prayer. So, the beginning and the conduct of every day

---

.Surah al-An'am ۶:۱۶۲ -۱

.is through remembrance and for the sake of God

Prayer is the secret of the one who—wherever he is and whoever he is, whether • traveling or not, on the ground or in the air, whether in poverty or in affluence—is .subservient to Him and not to other than Him

Prayer is the practical ideology of the Muslim in which he expresses his beliefs, • .ideas, aspirations, and models

Prayer means strengthening values and preventing the disintegration of the • personality of individuals and members of the society in the same way that if the .materials of a building are weak, the building will collapse

The call to prayer {adhan} is the clarion of monotheism {tawhid}, which summons • the scattered soldiers of Islam in a single line and under a single banner, and places .{them behind a just leader {imam

The imam of the congregation {jama‘ah} is one person so as to serve as a clue that • the imam of the society {jami‘ah} should also be one person so as to have .centralization in the conduct of affairs

The imam of the congregation is supposed to attend to the weakest among the • people, and this is a lesson that in decision-making, the deprived class of the society must be attended to. While praying, when the Messenger of Allah (S) heard the cry of a child, he hurriedly performed the prayer so that in case the mother of the child had ever participated in prayer, she could quickly attend to the needs of

p: ۳۱

(her child!(۱

The first command after the creation of man was the command for prostration • (addressed to the angels: “Prostrate before Adam (Adam)!”(۲

The first place on earth that surfaced and became dry was the site of worship • ((Mecca and the Ka‘bah).(۳

The first task done by the Messenger of Allah (S) after his emigration {hijrah} to • .Medina was the construction of a mosque

Prayer is both the enjoinment of what is good {amr bi’l-ma‘ruf} and the forbiddance • of what is evil {nahyi ‘ani’l-munkar}. We say every day in the adhan and iqamah: “Come to prayer; come to (the means of) success; come to the best of deeds.” That is, of all affairs, the best deed is prayer. Also, prayer keeps man away from corruption :and indecency

(إِنَّ الصَّلاةَ تَنْهى عَنِ الْفَحْشاءِ وَ الْمُنْكَرِ)

(Indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs.”(۴“

Prayer consists of movements which have emanated from consciousness and • cognition. It is through the cognition of God that by His order, for His sake and because of zeal for Him, we stand in prayer, and thus, the Qur’an has prohibited us

from praying while in a state of drunkenness(5) and indolence(6) so that whatever we recite in prayer must be with consciousness and attention.

• Prayer gives awareness. The Jum'ah prayer is held every Friday of the week and prior to it two sermons {khutbahs} are delivered. These two sermons are made in lieu of two rak'ahs of prayer, and in a sense, are part of

---

۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۸, pp. ۴۱, ۹۳.

۲- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۳۴: "And when We said to the angels, 'Prostrate before Adam,' they prostrated, except Iblis: he refused and acted arrogantly, and he was one of the faithless."

۳- Surah Al 'Imran ۳:۹۶: "Indeed the first house to be set up for mankind is the one at Bakkah, blessed and a guidance for all nations."

۴- Surah al-'Ankabut ۲۹:۴۵.

۵- Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۴۳: "O you who have faith! Do not approach prayer when you are intoximated, {not} until you know what you are saying."

۶- Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۱۴۲: "When they (hypocrites) stand up for prayer, they stand up lazily, showing off to the people and not remembering Allah except a little."

the prayer. According to Imam ar-Rida ('a), the sermons must inform the people of all the issues in the world.(1) Listening to the sermons and then praying means being informed and then praying.

• Prayer means exit from one's self and soaring toward God. The Qur'an says in this regard:

(وَ مَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهاجِرًا إِلَى اللّهِ وَ رَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللّهِ)

"And whoever leaves his home migrating toward Allah and His Apostle, and is then overtaken by death, his reward shall certainly fall on Allah."(2)

Imam Khomeini says:

Migration {hijrah} from the abode of the heart to God is one of the manifestations of this verse. Migration from self-admiration, self-centeredness and self-conceit toward worship of God, love of God and God-wariness is the greatest of migrations.(٣)

• Prayer is in the rank {manzilah} of the Greatest Name of Allah {ism al-a'zam}, nay it is the Great Name of Allah itself!

• In prayer, the honor {'izzah} of the Lord {rabb} and the lowliness {dhillah} of the servant {'abd} is manifested, and this station is already sublime.

• Prayer is the banner of Islam.

Just as a banner is a symbol, prayer is the symbol and the emblem of Islam. Just as a flag is respected, and insulting it is tantamount to insulting a nation and country, insulting and neglecting prayer also means insulting and neglecting the religion as a whole. Just as hoisting the flag is a sign of political vitality and military prowess, performance of prayer is

---

١- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٨٩, p. ٢٠١.
٢- Surah an-Nisa' ٤:١٠٠.
٣- Sirr as-Salah, p. ١٢.

also the same.

Prayer and the Qur'an

In many cases, the Qur'an and prayer have been mentioned together such as in this verse:

(يَتْلُونَ كِتابَ اللّهِ وَ أَقامُوا الصَّلاهَ)

"Indeed those who recite the Book of Allah and maintain the prayer."(١)

And in another place, it states:

(وَ الَّذینَ يُمَسِّکُونَ بِالْکِتابِ وَ أَقامُوا الصَّلاةَ)

(As for those who hold fast to the Book and maintain the prayer."(۲"

Sometimes, one attribute has been mentioned for prayer and the Qur'an, just as the :word 'remembrance' {dhikr} has also been mentioned for the Qur'an

(إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّکْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ)

(Indeed We have sent down the Reminder and indeed We will preserve it."(۳"

:'In addition, the philosophy of prayer has also been mentioned as 'remembrance

(وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِکْرِی)

(And maintain the prayer for My remembrance."(۴"

What is interesting is that sometimes instead of the word 'prayer' {salah}, the word :'recital' {qur'an} has been mentioned, such as in this verse

(إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ کانَ مَشْهُودًا)

(Indeed the dawn recital is attended {by angels}."(۵"

It is said that what is meant by the 'dawn recital' {qur'an al-fajr} is the dawn prayer .{{salah as-subh

Apart from the fact that the recital of the Qur'an in the form of Surah al-Fatihah and another surah is one of the obligatory parts of the prayer, prayer is discussed in most surahs {suwar} of the Qur'an including both the longest surah (Surah al-Baqarah, n. ۲) .(and the shortest surah (Surah al-Kawthar, n. ۱۰۸

!Prayer and qisas

The law on qisas(۶) is discussed not only in Islam but in all divine

.Surah al-Fatir (or al-Mala'ikah) ۳۵:۲۹ -۱

.Surah al-A'raf ۷:۱۷۰ -۲

.Surah al-Hijr ۱۵:۹ -۳

.Surah Ta Ha ۲۰:۱۴ -۴

.Surah al-Isra' ۱۷:۷۸ -۵

Qisas (literally means retribution or retaliation) in the Islamic jurisprudence is to be -۶ executed against a criminal who committed such crime as murder, amputation of a body limb, or laceration and beating according to legal decree when the victim or his {.guardians seek retribution in lieu of receiving a fine or blood money. {Trans

religions according to which the punishment for a person who cuts somebody's ear is to cut his ear and the penalty of one who breaks somebody's tooth is to break his tooth as well, in order to implement justice. One of the cases of qisas is that the hand of a thief must be amputated. But only four fingers are to be amputated and the palm :of his hand should not be included; for, the Qur'an says

(وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا)

(The places of worship belong to Allah, so do not invoke anyone along with Allah."(۱"

This is because at the time of prostration {sujud} in prayer, he has to put the palm of his hand on the ground. Thus, concerning the penalty for theft, the issue of prayer and prostration must be taken into account and the palm of his hand should not be !amputated, so even a thief's right of worship is respected

{Worship {'ibadah} and guardianship {wilayah

Worship {'ibadah} has value when it is not superficial. In fact, it should be associated with cognizance of the heavenly leader and his guardianship {wilayah} and .associated with humility and its particular disciplines

Hadrat 'Ali ('a) was encumbered by a group of holier-than-thou prayer performers who were known in history under the labels, Mariqun and Khawarij.(۲) They were those whose foreheads were calloused on account of long and frequent prostrations in prayer. Yet, they revolted against 'Ali ('a) and unsheathed their swords against him.

We also read in the hadiths that when the Imam

p: ۳۵

.Surah al-Jinn ۷۲:۱۸ -۱

The Kharijites {khawarij} or al-Mariqun (a name given to them by Imam 'Ali and -۲ meaning "those who missed the truth of religion") were a group of quasi-holy, narrow-minded Muslims who were originally followers of Imam 'Ali and fought alongside him at the Battle of Siffin. Initially they supported arbitration, pushing Imam 'Ali to accept it; however, later they revolted against it arguing that because God was the only true arbitrator, Imam 'Ali and those who agreed with him in the arbitration were not simply wrong; they were in fact unbelievers, hence they could have no dealings with them. On Imam 'Ali's return to Iraq from Siffin, this group seceded from his army and set up camp on the banks of the Nahrawan canal. The Kharijites (or seceders) became a fierce group who believed that they were the only true Muslims, and as such they began terrorizing people whom they regarded as unbelievers. Imam 'Ali was at first able to talk to them and persuade some of them to cease their hostilities, but eventually he was forced to take up arms against them. In ۶۵۹ CE he attacked their army under the leadership of 'Abdullah ibn Wahab al-Rasibi at Nahrawan almost annihilating them. Nahrawan was the third and last battle Imam 'Ali {.engaged in with his internal enemies. {Trans

.of the Time ('a) would appear, a group of mosques will act against him

Do not imagine that those who had gone to Karbala' to kill Imam al-Husayn ('a) were all neglectors of prayer {tarik as-salah}. In fact, they used to even attend !congregational prayers! Mu'awiyah and Yazid themselves were mosque-goers

Yes, worship, which is associated with ignorance {jahalah}, regards killing the most devoted worshipper {'abid} among mankind as the greatest form of worship, and goes to kill 'Ali ('a) on the Night of Power {laylah al-qadr} with the aim of seeking !nearness to Allah

Not only prayer but in fact all other forms of worship should be associated with

cognizance of the leader of truth and obedience to him. It has been stated in the traditions that God has made Hajj obligatory so that the people could gather around His House and establish communication with the infallible Imams (‘a) at this center of .gathering

Nowadays, however, millions of people gather around the Ka‘bah but because they have no divine leader they have been splintered, and in spite of having this center of !unity and economic leverage, they still suffer setbacks from a handful of Jews

Yes, Islam is a totality which is indivisible. Prayer without the acknowledgment of guardianship {wilayah} is unacceptable. Prayer without the payment of zakah is invalid. In the same manner, alms-giving without the performance of prayer is .nullified

The precepts of Islam are like limbs of a body none of which can replace the other. The eye can neither

p: ۳۶

assume the function of the ear nor can the ear assume the function of the hand. In Islam also, the performance of prayer cannot replace the payment of zakat. In the same manner, neither of the two can be substituted for jihad and struggle in the way .of God. Rather, the aggregate of them is Islam

Prayer and leadership

If the prayer is only conducted by the divine leaders, the tentacles of oppression and the taghut would be shattered. The ‘Id {feast} prayer of Imam ar-Rida (‘a) commenced with such grandeur and majesty that the oppressive government itself trembled and understood that if they allowed this prayer to be completed, the ‘Abbasid rule would also come to an end. Thus, Ma’mun ordered the Imam (‘a) to be .taken into custody along the way

The reason why the prayers of Muslims today are ineffective is that only a part of the injunctions of the Qur’an are practiced while other parts are forgotten. In this regard,

:the Qur’an states

(وَ أَقيمُوا الصَّلاهَ وَ آتُوا الزَّكاهَ وَ أَطيعُوا الرَّسُولَ)

(Maintain the prayer and give the zakat, and obey the Apostle.”(١“

Today, however, some people perform prayers but do not give zakah. They are also those who say their prayers and give zakah but accept the guardianship {wilayah} of infidels {kuffar}. In other words, they have faith in God but they do not deny the .taghut. This is defective faith

:God says

(فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطّاغُوتِ وَ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللّهِ فقد استَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَهِ الْوُثْقى)

So“

p: ٣٧

.Surah an-Nur ٢۴:۵۶ -١

one who disavows the Rebels {taghut} and has faith in Allah has held fast to the (firmest handle.”(١

That is, both the disavowal of the taghut and faith in God are required. Yet, nowadays Muslims have forgotten the declaration of disavowal of the taghuts and infidels. So, :concerning those who turn to the taghut, the Qur’an states

(أَ لَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذينَ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا)

(Have you not regarded those who claim that they believe…?”(٢“

{The degrees of worship {‘ibadah

If we ask a child why he loves his father and mother, he will reply that it is because they buy him candies, clothes and shoes! But if we ask an adolescent why he loves his parents, he will say: “It is because my parents are the symbol of my identity and

".personality, and they are kind and sympathetic to me

As the child grows older, fondness and appreciation for parents increases and he no longer thinks about shoes and such things. Many children regard rendering services to their parents as a means to their own perfection and nearness {qurb} to Allah, and .they think beyond material things

Worship and devotion to God is also like that. Each person worships God for a :particular reason. Worship has various stages

First step: Some people worship God to express gratitude to Him for His graces. In :addressing the common people, the Qur'an states

(فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ الَّذِی أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ)

Let them worship the Lord of this House, who has fed them {and saved them} from" ,hunger

p: ۳۸

.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۲۵۶ -۱

.Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۶۰ -۲

(and secured them from fear."(۱

The first step (stage or degree) of worship, which we shall call 'worship for gratitude', is exactly like the child's love for his parents—it is because of their purchase of !candies, clothes and shoes that he loves them

Second step: At this stage, man worships God due to the effects and blessings of worship and they pay attention to the spiritual and religious effects of prayer. As the :Qur'an discloses

(إِنَّ الصَّلاۃَ تَنْهی عَنِ الْفَحْشاءِ وَ الْمُنْکَرِ)

(Indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs."(۲"

This stage of worship which we call ‘worship for advancement’ is similar to the love of the adolescent for his parents—he pays respect to them as they have been his tutors and trainers and have protected him from deviations and dangers.

Third step: This is a higher step or stage of worship. God says to Hadrat Musa (Moses) (‘a):

(وَأَقِمِ الصَّلاةَ لِذِكْرِی)

“And maintain the prayer for My remembrance.”(3)

Hadrat Musa (‘a) performs prayer not because of food and water; it is not because of protection from corruption and wrongdoings either; for, he was essentially far from gluttony and misdeeds. He is among the great prophets {ulu’l-‘azm},(4) and he says his prayer for the sake of love for God and remembrance of Him. For the saints of God, love for God is the best reason for worship.

Yes, there are children who sit in the front of a religious assembly {majlis} along with the adults so that they would be better entertained or served with

---

1- Surah al-Quraysh ۱۰۶:۳-۴.

2- Surah al-‘Ankabut ۲۹:۴۵.

3- Surah Ta Ha ۲۰:۱۴.

4- Ulu’l-‘azm: literally, resolute figures or men of decision. {Trans.}

refreshments better! But there are also individuals who sit along with the adults so as to receive more spiritual benefit from them and they are concerned with entertainment or refreshments. For them, this very fondness of the scholars is a value in itself.

Fourth step: This stage, which is the highest and the most superior stage of worship, is not for gratitude, advancement and enthusiasm; rather, it is for the sake of nearness {qurb}—nearness to God.

We have four verses in the Qur'an which make the performance of prostration {sujud} incumbent on the one who recites any of them. One of these verses mentions :the same issue of nearness {qurb} to Allah through worship. The Qur'an states

(وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ)

)But prostrate and draw near {to Allah}."(١"

Worship has various degrees and stages which are different from each other .depending upon the spiritual degree and faith of the individual

{The visage of worship {'ibadah

• Worship {'ibadah} and servitude {'ubudiyyah} brought the Messenger of Allah (S) to :{ascension {mi'raj

(سُبْحَانَ الَّذِى أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلاً مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الأَقْصَى)

Immaculate is He who carried His servant on a journey by night from the Sacred")Mosque to the Farthest Mosque."(٢

• :Worship paves the ground for the descent of angels

(وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِى رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَى عَبْدِنَا)

)We have sent down (the revelation through angels) to Our servant."(٣"

• Worship causes the supplication of man to be granted, for prayer is the covenant of God(۴) and whoever fulfills the covenant of God, God in turn will also fulfill his :covenant

(أَوْفُوا

١- ٩۶:١٩ Surah al-'Alaq.

٢- ١٧:١ Surah al-Isra' (or Bani Isra'il).

.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۲۳ -۳

-۴ Surah Ya Sin ۳۶:۶۰-۶۱: (أَ لَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يا بَنى آدَمَ أَنْ لا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبينٌ وَ أَنِ اعْبُدُونى هذا صِراطٌ مُسْتَقيمٌ) "Did I not exhort you, O children of Adam, saying, 'Do not worship Satan. He is indeed your manifest enemy. Worship Me. That is the straight path'?"

بِعَهْدى أُوفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ)

"And fulfill My covenant that I may fulfill your covenant."(۱)

• The person who does not worship God is more abject than stones and other inanimate objects, for the Qur'an reveals:

(وَ إِنَّ مِنْها لَما يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللّهِ)

"And indeed there are some of them (stones) that fall for the fear of Allah."(۲)

This is while some people do not submit to the Fountainhead and Creator of the universe.

• Worship is the symbol of the will power and the personality of man. The person who is in the midst of his own desires and instincts, if he would wish and decide to move toward God, that act is valuable. If not, the angels who have no desire {shahwah} and wrath {ghadab} are perpetually in the state of worship.

• Worship makes the most unknown person on the earth the most renowned person in heaven.

• Worship links the small island of man to the Spring of existence.

• Worship means to take a glance at all of existence from above.

• Worship means the blossoming of the dormant, mystical and spiritual faculties in man's being.

• Worship is a value acquired by man through resolution and will power. It is different from value attained because of family status or because of innate talents which are

.inborn and not acquired by choice

• Worship is the renewal of allegiance to God and the new fostering of spiritual life.

• Worship is the barrier to sin and the extinguisher of its effects. It is remembrance and

---

۱- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۴۰.
۲- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۷۴.

consciousness of God that prevents man from committing sin, and not man's knowledge of the sin.

• Worship is filling the vessel of the soul with the remembrance of God, which if it is filled with other than Him, is an act of injustice to the essence of humanity.

• Worship is so valuable for the earthly ground in that entrance to this sacred ground without ritual purity is not permissible, such as entrance to the mosque, the Ka'bah and Quds.

• Worship and servitude to God is itself a value even if our supplications and requests are not granted.

• Worship is expressed both in the state of happiness and sadness. When God gives the glad tidings of Kawthar to His Prophet (S), He exhorts him to pray:

(إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاکَ الْکَوْثَرَ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّکَ وَانْحَرْ)

"Indeed We have given you abundance. So pray to your Lord."(۱)

God also enjoins prayer in facing difficulties and painful events:

(وَاسْتَعِينُواْ بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلاَهِ)

"And take recourse in patience and prayer."(۲)

Prayers that relieve difficulty

Whenever we encounter difficulty or want to ask for something, Islam enjoins us to pray to God particularly for the removal of our difficulty or the granting of our request. :At this point, it is appropriate to mention one example of these prayers

The prayer of Ja'far at-Tayyar

Ja'far at-Tayyar was a brother of Hadrat 'Ali ('a) who, during the emigration {hijrah} to Abyssinia, was able through his apt argument and behavior to draw the attention of King Negus and many others toward Islam, and to become the pioneer of Islamic propagation

---

.Surah al-Kawthar ۱۰۸:۱-۲ -۱

.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۴۵ -۲

.in the continent of Africa

During the Battle of Mu'tah, he lost both his hands in the way of God and in lieu of hands God gave him two wings in paradise. He, therefore, became well-known as at-.{tayyar {the winged one

When Ja'far went to Medina from Abyssinia, the Prophet (S) said: "Would you like me to offer you a precious gift?" The people imagined that the Prophet (S) would give him a certain amount of gold or silver and thus they thronged forward in order to see the Prophet's (S) gift. But the Prophet (S) said: "I shall teach you a prayer as a gift which, if you perform it daily, it will be better for you than the whole world and what is in it, and if you perform it every day, every Friday, every month or every year, God will forgive (your sins during the interval of the two prayers (even if it is an interval of one year).(۱

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "Whenever you have a problem or something to ask, supplicate after saying the prayer of Ja'far (at-Tayyar) {salah ja'far} and it will be ".granted, God willing

This prayer has been narrated with reliable Sunni and Shi'ah chains of transmission ({isnad}, and it has acquired the name, Iksir al-A'zam and Kibriyyah al-Ahmar.(2)

The manner of performing this prayer has been recorded in the first part of Mafatih al-Jinan(3) under the deeds {a'mal} for Friday after the prayers of the infallible .(Imams ('a

Of course, this prayer is one

p: ۴۳

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۱۸, p. ۴۲۱ -۱

".Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۹۱, "Bab Fadl Salah Ja'far -۲

Mafatih al-Jinan {Keys to the Gardens of Paradise}: a standard manual of Shi'i -۳ devotion containing the supplicatory prayers of the infallible Imams ('a) as well as formulae for recitation at particular times or during visitation of the tombs of the Imams ('a), complied from Bihar al-Anwar {Oceans of Lights} and other sources by {.Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi, a scholar of vast learning who died in Najaf in ۱۹۴۰. {Trans

of the tens of recommended {mustahabb} prayers for the removal of difficulties which have been transmitted. Recently, a book entitled, Namaz-ha-ye Mustahabb {Recommended Prayers}, has been written, which has mentioned approximately ۳۵۰ recommended prayers with their particular names and manner of performance. This diversity itself attests to the importance of prayer, and a prayer for every occasion .has been recorded

The sanctity of prayer

The sanctity of prayer is such that it has been recommended that the time for the execution of some deeds such as making a vow {qasam} or giving testimony .{shahadah} should be after the recitation of prayers

:In Surah al-Ma'idah ۵:۱۰۶, the Qur'an states

) يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا شَهَادَةُ بَيْنِكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ حِينَ الْوَصِيَّةِ اثْنَانِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ أَوْ آخَرَانِ مِنْ غَيْرِكُمْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ

ضَرَبْتُمْ فِی الأرْضِ فَأَصَابَتْكُمْ مُصِيبَةُ الْمَوْتِ تَحْبِسُونَهُمَا مِنْ بَعْدِ الصَّلاهِ فَيُقْسِمَانِ بِاللَّهِ إِنِ ارْتَبْتُمْ لا نَشْتَرِی بِهِ ثَمَنًا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَى وَلا نَكْتُمُ شَهَادَةَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا إِذًا لَمِنَ الآثِمِينَ)

O you who have faith! The witness between you, when death approaches any of you,“ while making a bequest, shall be two fair men from among yourselves—or two from among others,(۱) if you are journeying in the land and the affliction of death visits you. You shall detain the two of them after prayer, and, if you have any doubt, they shall vow by Allah, ‘We will not sell it for any gain, even if it were a relative, nor will we conceal the testimony of Allah, for then we would indeed be among the

p: ۴۴

That is, from among the non-Muslims, on non-availability of Muslim witnesses - ۱ {.during journey. {Q Trans

(sinners’.”(۱

It is widely practiced nowadays that oath-taking ceremonies are done in the presence of the Qur’an and by putting the hand on the Qur’an, but the Qur’an itself in this !regard states that taking an oath should be done after the performance of prayer

The Universality of Prayer

Both in cosmic creation {afarinesh-e takwini} and in religiously legal precepts {dasturat-e tashri‘i}, God has applied the loftiest and most perfect programs. For example, in the creation of mother’s milk, He has accumulated all the nutrients, which .are needed by the infant

If we take a glance at the creation of man, we realize that whatever is present in .nature has also been placed in man

.If there is the sound of thunder in nature, there is the voice (shouting) in man

.If there are plants and herbs in nature, there is growth of hair on man

.If there are rivers in nature, there are veins both large and small in man

If there are fresh and salty waters in nature, there are salty tears and fresh saliva in .man

.If there are many minerals in nature, there are also abundant talents latent in man

:There is a poem attributed to Hadrat ‘Ali (‘a) which states

أتزعَم انّکَ جرمٌ صغیر

و فیک انطوی العالم الاکبر

O man! You imagine that you constitute a small body where in fact a big world is .placed in you

.Prayer is also a divine handiwork in which God has somehow placed all values

?Which perfection is it that is valuable to man and cannot be found in prayer

Remembrance of God

.Surah al-Ma’idah ۵:۱۰۶ -۱

is a value and it is the only means of giving tranquility to the heart, and prayer is a .{remembrance of God—“Allahu akbar” {Allah is greater

Remembrance of the Day of Resurrection is a value and it prevents the commission of sin and corruption, and prayer is remembering the “Yawm ad-din” {Day of (Judgment}. (۱)

To be in the ranks of the prophets, the martyrs and the righteous is a value, and in prayer we beseech God for us to be in the “sirat alladhina an‘amta ‘alayhim” {the path (of those whom You have blessed}. (۲)

We declare our aversion and disavowal {bara’ah} of the tyrants and deviants by saying: “ghayri’l-maghdubi ‘alayhim wa la’d-dallin” “such as have not incurred Your

(wrath, nor are astray”.(۳)

Justice which is the foremost of the values has been considered a necessary .{prerequisite for the leader of the congregation {imam al-jama‘ah

Following the leader of the congregation in prayer is a valuable social principle, which .stipulates that instead of obstinacy and individualism, we have to follow a just leader

In selecting the congregational leader, qualities which are valued are always taken .into account: the most just, the most knowledgeable, the most eloquent, etc

Standing while facing the qiblah calls to mind many values. Mecca is the torture site of Bilal; the place of sacrifice of Isma‘il (Ishmael) (‘a); the birthplace of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a); the base of the uprising of al-Mahdi (‘a); the testing ground of Ibrahim (Abraham) .(‘a); and the place of worship of all prophets and saints

Everything is movement in

.Surah al-Fatihah ۱:۴ -۱

.Surah al-Fatihah ۱:۷ -۲

.Surah al-Fatihah ۱:۷ -۳

prayer—every day and night; in bowing down {ruku‘}, prostration {sujud} and standing straight {qiyam}; and movement in going to the mosque and the place of prayer. Therefore, do not be static, silent and solitary. Rather, always strive and .move; of course, for the sake and in the way of God

In prayer the spirit and soul of man is purged. Prayer removes the dust of pride and vanity because every night and day for many times man places the most sublime part of his body (forehead) on the ground, and prostration on the earth is better than on a .stone because lowliness is placing oneself on the ground

Prostrate on the ground and what grows in it provided that it is not edible so that you

!would not think of your stomach

Prostrate on pure earth for traversing impure paths will not lead to purity and the !Fountainhead of Purities

Crying for fear of God is a value, and the Qur'an has praised prostration accompanied (by weeping: "(They would fall down) weeping in prostration."(۱

Prayer is a divine code of life which has been prescribed for us from the moment of birth till the point of death. When a baby is born, recite the adhan and iqamah in his right and left ears, respectively, as it is an admonition for prayer (when he grows up): ."“Hayya 'ala's-salah” “Come to prayer

At the time of his death, you also bury him with the performance of the "prayer for the dead" {salah al-mayyit}. Throughout your life

---

.Surah Maryam ۱۹:۵۸ -۱

:you should always be in a state of worshipping and glorifying God

(And worship you Lord until certainty (or death) comes to you."(۱“

Prayer is man's union with nature. In determining the prescribed time for prayers particularly the dawn {subh} and noon {zuhr} prayers, you have to look at where the sun is; in order to determine the direction of the qiblah, we have to look at the stars; in performing the recommended prayers on auspicious days, you have to monitor the movement of the moon (in order to determine the exact day). In taking a bath and performing ablution, you have to utilize water, and in performing prostration {sujud} .and dry ablution {tayammum}, you have to touch the ground

Which Wise Designer has designed this relation of the prayer with the sun, the moon, ?the stars, water, and the ground

In one way or another, the other obligatory religious acts are also present in the

:prayer

Like the person fasting, the person praying has no right to eat, drink and engage in .sexual activity

The Ka‘bah is the qiblah and the axis of activity of the person praying, just like a .person performing Hajj

Like someone engaging in jihad, the person praying is also engaged in a jihad—the .{greater jihad {jihad al-akbar} which is combat with the self {jihad an-nafs

Prayer is itself the highest form of the enjoinment of good {amr bi’l-ma‘ruf} and the .{forbiddance of evil {nahyi ‘ani’l-munkar

Migration {hijrah} is one of the most important values in our religion. Hadrat Ibrahim ((Abraham

p: ۴۸

.Surah al-Hijr ۱۵:۹۹ -۱

:a) migrated on account of prayer, bringing his wife and son to the Ka‘bah and saying‘)

(رَّبَّنَا إِنِّی أَسْکَنتُ مِن ذُرِّیَّتِی بِوَادٍ غَیْرِ ذِی زَرْعٍ عِندَ بَیْتِکَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِیُقِیمُواْ الصَّلاَهَ)

O Lord! I have settled part of my descendants in a barren valley, by Your sacred“ (House, our Lord, that they may maintain the prayer.”(۱

What is interesting is that Hadrat Ibrahim (‘a) does not say: “I made hijrah in order to ”.perform Hajj pilgrimage.” Instead, he says: “Saying the prayer was my aim in hijrah

.In any case, God has encapsulated all values in prayer, with prayer and for prayer

:If adornment and hygiene constitute a value (as they do), Islam thus enjoins

(خُذُوا زِینَتَکُمْ عِنْدَ کُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ)

(Put on your adornment on every occasion of prayer."(٢)"

.That is, put on your clean and perfumed garments when going to the mosque

At the time of prayer, women are also enjoined to wear their jewelry with which they (adorn themselves.(٣

Even the issue of cleaning the teeth is given attention, and we read in the traditions that praying with cleaned {miswak} teeth is equivalent to praying ٧٠ times without miswak.(۴) And it has been said: "Do not eat onion and garlic before going to the mosque"(۵) so as not to annoy others with the odor of your mouth and drive the .people away

In any case, this is the prayer of Islam, but our prayer is the prayer which we do not perform, or perform carelessly and incorrectly, or perform without being in congregation, or

---

١- Surah Ibrahim ١۴:٣٧.

٢- Surah al-A'raf ٧:٣١.

٣- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٨٠, p. ١٨٨.

۴- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٧٣, p. ١٣٣.

۵- Risaleh-ye Ahkam-e Imam Khomeini, "Issue ٩١٠."

!which we perform at its last moments

The mosques whose custodians were once Ibrahim, Isma'il and Zakariyya (Zechariah) ('a),(١) and the place where the mother of Maryam (Mary) had made a vow in asking God to let her child be its custodian,(٢) become places whose custodians in most cases are disabled, aged, sickly, uneducated, and sometimes even bad people! Why is it that being a custodian of the holy shrine of Imam ar-Rida ('a) is an !?honor, but being a custodian of the House of God is not

Why should our mosques be such that anyone who comes inside will get sad,

melancholic and indolent? Is the mosque a house of mourning? An assembly convened to pray for the dead and on whose door black banners should be hung? Of course, thanks be to God, in recent years a movement has been initiated in the mosques (in Iran) and most of them are now equipped with libraries and provide such .other service-oriented activities as interest-free loan funds

What a beautiful hadith it is, which states: "On the Day of Resurrection, these three shall complain against the people: The 'alim {scholar} to whom the people would not refer; the Qur'an which was in the house but was not read; and the mosque to which (the people paid no attention.(٣

There are many thing that can be said about the mosque and recently, a book entitled, Sima-ye Masjid {The Visage of the Mosque} that explains the status of .mosque in Muslim society has been published

---

.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۱۲۵; Surah Maryam ۱۹:۱۱ -۱
Surah Al 'Imran ۳:۳۵: "When the wife of Imran said, 'My Lord, I dedicate to You what -۲ ".is in my belly, in consecration
.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۲, p. ۴۱ -۳

Nevertheless, in a nutshell, the mosque during the early period of Islam was the venue Muslims to gather to make decisions and conduct consultations, in acquiring knowledge and information; it was the base for combatants and strugglers on the Path {mujahidun}; the place to attend to the needs of the poor and sick; and the base for rising up against tyrannical governments and delivering fiery sermons against .them

It has been this same sublime status of the mosque that prompted Muslims throughout history to apply the best architectural designs in building them and to endow huge amounts of wealth for their administration so that they could keep on .flourishing and thriving

{Intention {niyyah

point

.{The first essential element {rukn} of prayer is the intention {niyyah

Intention means that we have to know what we are doing, what we are reciting, and .for whom and for what a certain movement is made

The value of every deed lies in the intention and motive behind it; not merely in the deed itself. Thus, the quality of the actions of a person who stops on a red traffic light in order to maintain order and respect for the law is different from that of a person who carries out the same actions but out of fear of the traffic officer or of the fine that he might receive for violating traffic regulations. In all forms of worship, especially in .prayer, intention occupies a special importance

In principle, what makes an action a form of worship is

p: ٥١

the divine intention behind it. If such an intention is not present, even if the outward .appearance of a deed is good and proper, it would not have the value of worship

:In this regard, the Holy Prophet of Islam (S) said

إِنَّما الاَعْمالُ بِالنِّيات.

(Verily, the action is (judged) by the intention (behind it)."(١"

Yes, the criterion for an action to be judged materialistic or spiritual lies in the .intention and motives behind it

Sincere Intention

Sincere intention means that man acts for the sake of God only and in the depth of his being, God and His pleasure are his aims, without expecting reward, gratitude or (admiration from others.(٢

The loaves of bread that the Ahl al-Bayt of the Messenger of Allah (S) gave to the orphans, captives and poor on successive nights at the time of breaking fast {iftar} did not have much material value, but since they were given sincerely, on this account God revealed a surah.(۳)

:And concerning it, 'Attar an-Nayshaburi says

گذشته زین جهان، وصف سنانش

گذشته زآن جهان، وصف سِه نانش

No one in this world can describe his sword. No one in the hereafter can describe his three loaves of bread.

We read in history that a certain person was slain in the battlefield and everybody said: "He is a martyr {shahid}." But the Prophet (S) said: "He was killed in the way of a donkey {qatil al-himar}!" The people were astonished, but the Prophet (S) said: "His aim in going to the battlefield was not God; rather, when he saw that the enemy

---

۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۰, p. ۲۱۰.

۲- Surah al-Insan (or, ad-Dahr) ۷۶:۹: "We feed you only for the sake of Allah. We do not want any reward from you nor any thanks."

۳- Surah al-Insan (or, ad-Dahr) ۷۶.

was riding a good donkey, he said to himself: 'I will kill him and take his donkey as war booty {ghanimah}.' But he did not succeed and that infidel killed him instead. So, he was killed in the way of a donkey {qatil al-himar}!"(۱)

Making one's intention sincere is indeed a difficult and taxing work. Sometimes, wicked thoughts penetrate the soul of man to such an extent that he himself is unaware of it. As such, it is narrated in the tradition that ostentation {riya'} in matters of worship and polytheism {shirk} are more subtle and silent than the movement of a black ant on a black rock during a dark night.(۲)

So many individuals imagine that their intention is nearness {qurb} to Allah, but during the ups and downs of their lives, it becomes obvious that their motive is not a hundred .percent pure and sincere

In the words of 'Allamah Shahid Mutahhari, intention means self-awareness, and :thus, the value of worship lies on gnosis and awareness. We read in a tradition

نِيَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ.

(The intention of the believer is more valuable than his action."(٣"

Just like the comparison between body and soul, the soul is better than the body and the humanity of man is related to his soul. In comparing intention and action, intention .is better than the act itself because it is the spirit of the action

Intention is so valuable that even if a person is unable to perform a good deed, God will reward him

---

.Muhajjah al-Bayda', vol. ٨, p. ١٠۴ -١

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٧٢, p. ٩٣ -٢

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٧٠, p. ٢١٠ -٣

(for he had the intention to do so.(١

The motive for seeking nearness {qurb} to Allah

The motive for nearness {qurb} means seeking proximity to the Divine Station. When it is said, "So-and-so is near or close to a certain national official," what is meant is not spatial, bodily and physical nearness, for if it were such, the office attendants are the closest or nearest to him. Rather, what is meant by this nearness is spiritual, .emotional in status and nearness in intimacy

Doing deeds seeking the pleasure of God does not mean that God would be influenced by our deeds and change His attitude or position toward us, and as such,

He becomes the subject of events and change. Instead, "nearness to Allah" means exaltation of the spirit through the ladder of existence whose consequence is the acquisition of influence in the creation. That is, proximity to the Fountainhead of .Creation and finding Him in one's heart

Just as there are differences in the levels of existence among inanimate objects, plants, animals, and human beings, there are also differences on the level of human beings with respect to proximity to the Fountainhead of Creation. Man could attain such nearness to God and be the nearest to Him so that he becomes the vicegerent of .Allah on the earth

Worship which is motivated by nearness {qurb} will make man more luminous and perfect and have more existential capacity {zarfiyyat-e wujudi}. All forms of worship, recommended prayers in particular, have significant roles in this affair, just as we :read in a hadith

لَا يَزالُ

.Muhajjah al-Bayda', vol. ۸, p. ۱۰۴ -۱

الْعَبْد يَتَقَرَّبُ اِلىَّ بِالنَّوافِل.

(That is, man can always get nearer to God through recommended prayers.(۱

Obligatory prayer is possibly done on account of fear of hell and the divine wrath, but the optional prayer is a sign of love and the secret of love to the Worshipped Being .{{ma'bud

{The degrees of proximity {qurb

The term "darajat" {degrees} has been mentioned frequently in the Qur'an and it has appeared with diverse interpretations—a fact which elicits subtle points. For some, the Qur'an states: "For them, there are degrees."(۲) For others, however, it says:

"They (themselves) are degrees."(3) It is like the case of great figures who even if they sit at the lower section of an assembly, that section can become "high"; they are themselves makers of degree and rank, and are not subject to degree and station.

This spiritual ranking is not exclusive to human beings; for, there is also hierarchy among the angels. The Qur'an thus says regarding Jibra'il (Archangel Gabriel) ('a): "One who is heard and trustworthy as well."(4)

In any case, the degrees of human beings in obedience to God are not similar:

1. Sometimes man obeys {muti'}, but not out of pleasure.

2. At some other times, he obeys {muti'} as well as loves {muhibb}; that is, he obeys God based on love and affection.

3. There are also times when he attains perfect gnosis {ma'rifah} far higher than obedience {ita'ah} and love {muhabbah} and whatever he sees is only God. Hadrat 'Ali ('a) says:

مارَأَيْتُ شَيْئاً إِلاّ و رَأَيْتُ الله قَبْلَه و بَعْدَه و مَعَه.

"I do not see

1- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۵, p. ۱۵۵.

2- Surah al-Anfal ۸:۴.

3- Surah Al 'Imran ۳:۱۶۳.

4- Surah at-Takwir ۸۱:۲۱.

anything except God, before it, after it and with it."(1)

We have to love God for the sake of God

It is said that in order to test the loyalty of his courtiers, Sultan Mahmud Ghaznawi set out with a caravan and placed an unlocked container of jewelry on a camel. Along the

way, they reached a valley. He roused the camel and thus the container turned upside .down and the jewels fell into the valley

The Sultan said: "Whatever jewels one may get belongs to him." Those who were around him left him, and they engaged themselves in amassing gold and silver. Meanwhile, it was observed that Ayyaz had abandoned the jewels and pursued the :Sultan. The Sultan asked him: "Why did you not amass jewels?" In reply, Ayyaz said

منم در قفای تو می تاختم

زخدمت نعمت نپرداختم

.{For me, I prefer to cling to you and thus I did not serve the grace {ni'mah

:Then, from this event Mawlawi concludes

گر از دوست چشمت به احسان اوست

تو در بند خویشی نه در بند دوست

خلاف طریقت بود کاولیاء

تمنّا کنند از خدا جز خدا

.If you are hoping for the Friend's grace, you love yourself not the Friend

It is contrary to the spiritual path {tariqah} of the awliya' to beseech God something .other than God

The Qur'an has strongly condemned those who call on God only for their own sakes and remember Him only in times of problems and at other times forget or even deny :Him

(فَإِذا رَكِبُوا فِى الْفُلْكِ دَعَوُا اللّهَ مُخْلِصينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمّا نَجّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ)

When they board"

.Tamashagah-e Raz, p. ۱۱۴ -۱

the ship, they invoke Allah putting exclusive faith in Him, but when He delivers them to land, behold, they ascribe partners {to Him}, being ungrateful for what We have given (them!"(۱

At any rate, working for one's self is egotism; for the sake of the people is idol-worship; and working for the sake of God and His creatures is dualism; and making .one's work and that of the creatures for the sake of God is worship of God

:{We thus read in the litanies {munajat

إلٰهی ما عَبَدتُکَ خَوْفاً مِنْ نارِک وَ لا طَمَعاً فی جَنَّتِک بَلْ وَجَدْتُک أهْلاً لِلْعِبادَه فَعَبْدتُک.

O God! My worship is not out of fear of hell or desire for Your paradise. Rather, it is" (because I found You worthy of being worshipped and thus I worshipped You."(۲

Yes, only traders work to earn profits and only slaves work out of fear, but free and noble men worship Him to express their gratitude for the divine graces, just as has :(been narrated in the words of the Infallibles {ma'sumin}(۳) ('a

اِنَّ قَومـاً عَبْـدوا الله رَغْبَةً فَتِلْک عِبادَةُ التُّجارِ وَ اِنَّ قوماً عَبْـدوا الله رَهْبَةً فَتلک عِبادَةُ الْعَبيـدِ وَ اِنَّ قوماً الله عَبْـدوا شُـكْراً فَتِلكَ عِبادَةُ الاَحْرارِ.

Indeed there is a group that worships Allah for gain; that is the worship of the trader." There is a group that worships Allah out of fear; that is the worship of the slave. And (there is a group that worships Allah out of gratitude; that is the worship of the free."(۴

In the language of

.Surah al-'Ankabut ۲۹:۶۵ -۱

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۰, p. ۱۸۶ -۲

Ma'sumin: those possessing the quality of 'ismah; i.e., the Prophet, Fatimah, and -۳

the Twelve Imams (‘a). See A Brief History of the Fourteen Infallibles, ۳rd ed. (Tehran: WOFIS, ۲۰۰۱). http://www.al-islam.org/brief-history-of-fourteen-infallibles [۱۵]
{.{Trans

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۱, p. ۱۴ -۴

(Hafiz,(۱

در ضمیر ما نمی گنجد بغیر از دوست کس

هر دو عالم را به دشمن دِه که ما را دوست بس

There is no one in our hearts (minds) but the Friend. Give the two worlds to the enemy .as the Friend suffices for us

In materialistic love, the person loves his object of love for himself, but in spiritual love the person dedicates himself to the Beloved. In the Supplication of Kumayl {du‘a’ :kumayl},(۲) ‘Ali (‘a) says

وَاجْعَلْ قَلْبِی بِحُبِّکَ مُتَیِّماً

"!O Lord! Make my heart enthralled by Your love"

{Attainment of the state of proximity {qurb

Attainment of the divine proximity {qurb-e ilahi} and motive for nearness {qurbah} is :achieved in two ways

One is to recognize the grandeur and station of God and the other is to recognize the .meanness and abjectness of other than Him

The Qur’an always mentions the divine favors and graces to the servants (of God) so as to make man enamored by the love for God. Stating His Attributes, His creatures, His material and spiritual assistance and the many favors, great and small—all in all .are meant to enhance our love for God

On the other hand, there are many verses which indicate the weakness and meanness of other than God, saying: Anyone and anything other than God have

neither honor nor power. Even if they combine together to create a fly, they would not be able to do so. Except Him who could answer the call of helpless and the indigent? How could it be proper to discuss others in association with God and regard them as

---

Khwajah Shams ad-Din Muhammad Hafiz Shirazi (ca. ۱۳۲۵-۱۳۹۱) was the fourteenth -۱ century Persian lyric bard and panegyrist, and commonly considered as the {.preeminent master of the ghazal form. {Trans

Du'a Kumayl {Supplication of Kumayl}: The supplication taught by Imam 'Ali ('a) to -۲ one of his loyal companions and staunch supporters of Islam, Kumayl ibn Ziyad. Usually offered on every night preceding Friday {Laylat'ul-Jum'ah} individually or in congregation after Isha' prayers, this supplication envisages divine teachings and solid foundations of religion in order to enable everyone to follow the right path for becoming a worthy Muslim. The Arabic text, English translation and commentary of this famous supplication are available online at http://www.al-islam.org/kumayl [۱۶]. {.{Trans

?equal to and partners of God

A Recollection

One of the maraji' at-taqlid(۱) of the Shi'ah world was Ayatullah al-'Uzma Burujerdi. During days of mourning, he used to hold mourning ceremonies in his residence. In one of these assemblies, he was not feeling well. So, he was resting in his private .room while listening to the speeches of the orators

One of those present in the mourning assembly said: "Extend salawah (invocation of blessings to the Prophet and his progeny ('a)) for the sake of the health and safety of "!the Imam of the Time and Aqa Burujerdi

Suddenly, they found out that he was knocking the door with his staff. His near relatives came and asked: "Is there anything we can do for you?" This great marja' at-taqlid said: "Why did you mention my name along with the name of the Imam of the

Time (‘a)? I do not have the worth for you to mention my name along with the name of the Imam and invoke blessings {salawah} on us both.”(٢)

This religious authority who was a deputy {na’ib} of the Imam of the Time (‘a) was not willing to let his name be mentioned along with the name of an infallible Imam, but many of us, on account of incorrect understanding and impoliteness, place the names of weak and thoroughly needy creatures along with the name of God, the Omnipotent, Absolute and Exalted, as if we regard them as equals.

Quality or quantity?

Islam has paid much attention to the manner of performing a task and

---

١ - Maraji‘ at-Taqlid (sing. Marja‘ at-Taqlid): literally means “Sources of Imitation”. Maraji‘ are the ‘ulama’ who have reached the position of Marja‘iyyah {Religious Reference Authority} because they have possessed such characteristics as justice, piety, superior knowledge, awareness and being oblivious to worldly possessions. The average people refer to them to find answers to their religious problems, and to follow their religious decrees. {Trans.}

٢- As narrated by Ayatullah Safi.

the underlying motive and purpose behind it. The Qur’an praises the better acts and not the amount of acts accomplished, saying:

(لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلاً)

“That He may test you {to see} which of you is best in conduct.”(١)

While in a state of ruku‘ {bowing down}, Hadrat ‘Ali (‘a) gave his ring to a beggar, and on account of this, a verse {ayah} of the Qur’an was revealed. Some people imagine that the reason behind the revelation of a verse because of a ring was that the ring was precious and thus they have said: “The value of the ring was equal to the tax and revenue of all of Shamat.”(٢)

This is while a ring with such a price could never be consistent with the simplicity {zuhd} of ‘Ali (‘a). It was equally incompatible with his sense of justice for him to have such a ring on his hand while some people were in a state of poverty and indigence. But the truth of the matter is that it was on account of the quality of the deed and not its quantity, and on account of the sincerity and intention for nearness {qurbah} and not the weight and magnitude of the ring’s value that the following verse was :revealed

(إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلاَةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ)

Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and“ give the zakat while bowing down.”(٣)

A Recollection

Bahlul saw a group of

.Surah Hud ۱۱:۷; Surah al-Mulk ۶۷:۲ -۱
Sham or Shamat: up until five centuries ago, included Syria of today, Lebanon and -۲ {.parts of Jordan and Palestine. {Trans
.Surah al-Ma’idah ۵:۵۵ -۳

people constructing a mosque and claiming that they were doing so for the sake of God. He inscribed on a stone: “The builder of this stone is Bahlul,” and placed it at the door of the mosque one night. The following day, when the workers saw the inscribed stone, they reported it to Harun ar-Rashid. So, he summoned Bahlul and asked him: ”?“Why have you assumed ownership of a mosque I am constructing

Bahlul replied: “If you are really constructing the mosque for the sake of God, then let my name be inscribed therein (as the owner). Anyway, God knows who the real builder is. Besides, He will not commit any mistakes in giving the reward. If it is really for the sake of God, whether my name or your name is inscribed there does not .matter

In doing so, Bahlul let him understand that he had no intention for nearness {qurbah} (to Allah), but rather for desire and fame. For this reason, the Qur’an likens the deeds :of the infidels {kuffar} to a mirage which seems to be water but it is not

(وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْآنُ مَاءً)

As for the faithless, their works are like a mirage in a plain, which the thirsty man“ (supposes to be water.”(۱)

In principle, Islam regards an act as righteous if its four constitutive elements are .good: the components of the action, the motive, means, and method

;The motive for nearness {qurbah} is necessary not only at the beginning of an act

p: ۶۱

.Surah an-Nur ۲۴:۳۹ -۱

rather, the intention for divine proximity should remain throughout the course of the .action otherwise the act in its entirety becomes void

If the motor of an airplane malfunctions for only a minute, the airplane will definitely come crashing down. Polytheism {shirk} or ostentation {riya’} in the intention {niyyah}, though for only a moment, will extinguish the entire act and render it .useless

Another recollection

On a certain flight, the passengers of an airplane preparing for take-off were asked to disembark from the aircraft and the flight was delayed for many hours. I asked about the reason behind the delay. Someone said: “A cockroach had been seen in the ”!?aircraft!” I exclaimed: “All this delay is because of a cockroach

It was said in reply: “Yes, because there have been many cases when a cockroach would gnaw through a wire and the control system of the aircraft would malfunction ”.and this could lead to a mishap

Many good deeds are supposed to lead to man's ascension toward God, but because of a spiritual vice, not only do they not lead to his ascension; instead, they would lead .to his fall

The intention gives value to the deed

Let us assume that out of oppression and aggression, someone killed another and it became known later that the victim had been a criminal who was supposed to have been executed. In this case, what the killer had done was beneficial, however the people will not praise the murderer because his intention was killing an innocent person and not executing a corruptor on the

.{earth {mufsid fi'l-ard

Thus, the usefulness of a work is not enough for it to be regarded as a righteous act. .In fact, it is necessary for it to be accompanied by a pure intention as well

In all instances, the Qur'an lays stress on the intention for nearness {qurbah} (to Allah) whether in the case of khums, zakah and other financial matters, or in the case of war and jihad against the enemy. The fact that the Qur'an emphasizes such phrases as "In the way of Allah,"(۱) "For the sake of Allah,"(۲) and "Seeking the pleasure of Allah(۳) is an indication of the importance of the intention for nearness .{qurbah} to Allah

If those who are performing beneficial acts on behalf of the people by constructing schools, hospitals, roads, and dormitories have no divine intention, they have committed an injustice to themselves because they themselves will not benefit from .those deeds although others will get much benefit from them

:That the Qur'an always mentions righteous deeds along with faith, saying

"(۴)Those who have faith and do righteous deeds,"(

or

Whoever acts righteously, {whether} male or female, should he (or she) be“ (faithful”(۵)

is because of the fact that the goodness of an act alone is not enough; rather, the .goodness of the doer is also required

Two historical accounts

۱. Bilal al-Habashi, who was the caller to prayer {mu‘adhdhin} of the Holy Prophet (S), would pronounce “sh” {shin} as “s” {sin} in the recital of the sentence, “Ashhadu an la ilaha illa’llah” as he had a defect

---

۱- For example, Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۱۹۰.
۲- For instance, Surah al-Insan (or, ad-Dahr) ۷۶:۹.
۳- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۲۰۷ and others.
۴- For example, Surah at-Tin ۹۵:۶; Surah al-‘Asr ۱۰۳:۳, and many others. {Trans.}
۵- Surah an-Nahl ۱۶:۹۷.

in pronunciation. The people criticized it, but the Prophet (S) said: “The sin of Bilal is (shin for God.”(۱)

Although outwardly his work was defective, since he had the motive for nearness .{qurbah} and good intentions, he received the reward

۲. ‘Abd Allah ibn Maktum was one of the sincere Companions of the Prophet (S) and a blind man. One day, this great Companion entered into an assembly where the Prophet (S) and some people were busy talking. As he could not see the other people in the assembly, he talked loudly. Being annoyed, one of those who were present in .the assembly frowned at him

In spite of the fact that frowning and smiling do not make any difference to a blind person as he cannot see, the Qur’an revealed a whole surah on account of that very :{frowning, and reproached the person who frowned in ten successive verses {ayat

(عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّی أَنْ جاءَهُ الأعْمَی وَمَا یُـدْرِیکَ لَعَلَّهُ یَزَّکَّی أَوْ یَـذَّکَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّکْرَی أَمَّا مَنِ اسْـتَغْنَی فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّی وَمَا عَلَیْکَ أَلا یَزَّکَّی وَأَمَّا مَنْ جاءَکَ یَسْعَی وَهُوَ یَخْشَی فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّی)

He frowned and turned away when the blind man approached him. And how do you“ know, maybe he would purify himself, or take admonition, and the admonition would benefit him! But as for someone who is self-complacent, you attend to him, though you are not liable if he does not purify himself. But he who comes hurrying to you, while he

---

.Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, hadith ۴۶۹۶ -۱

(fears {Allah}, you are neglectful of him."(۱)

So, the criterion of a deed is not its usefulness or harmfulness with which we would evaluate it and say: "If an action gives benefit to others, it is a righteous deed and if it renders harm then it is an impious act." Instead, we have to assess the relationship of the action with the person himself—what were his motives in doing it? Or, how is the action per se if it renders neither benefit nor harm to others?

Yes, in the school {maktab} of the prophets ('a), morality {akhlaq} has essential {dhati} value and not merely accidental {'aradi} value. It is not like the morality of a person which is meant to attract customers, maximize the volume of production and gather people around him.

In the episode of the 'abasa {he who frowned}, the criticism is anchored on this: Why did you frown at the blind man? Although the blind man cannot see you, frowning at a believer is in itself an abhorrent act.

In any case, the motive for nearness {qurbah} means that all actions must be done according to divine criteria and should not have dire political and social impact upon others.

The motive for nearness {qurbah} means that an act must be done for the sake of

God regardless of its resultant joy or pain. In describing the true believer, the Qur'an :states

(يُجاهِدُونَ فی سَبیلِ اللّهِ وَ لا یَخافُونَ لَوْمَهَ لائِمٍ)

They) wage jihad in the way of Allah, not)"

p: ۶۵

.Surah al-'Abasa ۸۰:۱-۱۰ -۱

(fearing the blame of any blamer."(۱

The motive for nearness {qurbah} means that one must say the truth and not be concerned about anything or anybody except Him, just as the Qur'an thus describes :the divine propagators

(الَّذینَ یُبَلِّغُونَ رِسالاتِ اللّهِ وَ یَخْشَوْنَهُ وَ لا یَخْشَوْنَ أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللّهَ وَ کَفی بِاللّهِ حَسیبًا)

Such as deliver the messages of Allah and fear Him, and fear no one except Allah," (and Allah suffices as reckoner."(۲

A recollection

One day, I was engrossed in doing supplication {du'a'} and paying homage {ziyarah} in the holy shrine of Imam ar-Rida ('a). One of the pilgrims {za'irin} sat beside me and as he recognized me from my TV program every Friday night, he gave me a sum of money, saying: "Aqa Qara'ati! Give this money to the poor." I said: "Like you, I have also come here for ziyarah and (here) in Mashhad I do not know of any poor people. ".You give it to the poor yourself

After sometime, he pleaded with me again and I also repeated my argument, and .then I resumed supplication

He repeated his plea for the third time. I was annoyed and said: "Today, with twenty tumans(۳) you disturbed my concentration three times. Please do not disturb me. You

yourself have to give this money to the poor." He said: "Aqa Qara'ati! This is not ".twenty tumans; it is one thousand tumans

I was thinking that he wanted to give twenty tumans to the poor. I reflected for some time and my anger faded away. I

p: ۶۶

۱- Surah al-Ma'idah ۵:۵۴.
۲- Surah al-Ahzab ۳۳:۳۹.
۳- Tuman: every tuman is equivalent to ten Iranian rials. {Trans.}

said to him: "There is an institution here for helping the orphans." He said: "It is up to you. You spend it as you deem it appropriate." He gave the money to me and left.

I put down the book of supplication and started reflecting. If it is for the sake of God, what is the difference between twenty tumans and one thousand tumans? I realized that this scene was a test for me, reminding me that the motive for nearness {qurbah} had not yet become alive in me.

One of the signs of sincerity is that the volume of work, the individuals involved, the places, types of work, and situations make no difference for the person. His only concern is to seek the pleasure of God regardless of whether he benefits from it or not, or the people would know or not, support it or not.

Of course, humanitarianism and doing something for the people is nobler than egotism, but in the absence of a divine motive, it has no divine value.

In the words of Shahid Mutahhari, the motive for nearness {qurbah} is an essential condition {shart-e dhati} and not a contractual and delegated condition; it is a creational {takwini} condition and not a ceremonial {tashrifati} one.(۱)

If we say: The condition for reaching Mecca is traversing the way to the city, this is a natural and essential condition, and not a contractual one. Similarly, the condition to attain the station of nearness to Allah is to have the motive for

---

See Murtada Mutahhari, Wala-ha va Wilayat-ha, pp. ۲۹۰-۲۹۳. For this book's English -۱ translation, see Murtada Mutahhari, Master and Mastership (Karachi: Islamic Seminary Publications, n.d.), chap. ۷, "Wala of Control," available online at {.http://www.al-islam.org/mastership [۱۷]. {Trans

.nearness {qurbah} and this is an essential condition

The effects and blessings of a pure intention

Through a cursory glance at the verses of the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions, we shall find out many effects and blessings of having a pure intention, some of which we :shall mention concisely below

Anyone who has a good intention shall have abundant provisions.(۱) Perhaps this .۱ hadith means that because of his good intention, his behavior and treatment of people is somehow pleasant and naturally, more people will be attracted to his .business and thus he will earn more income

A good intention increases man's success and opportunity, makes his life pure and .۲ (desirable, and wins him more friends.(۲

Divine favors for individuals depend on their having a good intention. The purer and .more sincere their intention is, the more divine favors they will obtain

.It endows long life to man .۳

It is narrated in the traditions: If a person who just performed Hajj pilgrimage would intend and decide when he is returning home to go to Hajj again the following year, (God will prolong his life on account of that good intention.(۳

A good intention compensates for one's past (sins). 'Ali ('a) says: If a sinner having a .۴ good intention repents, God will return to him whatever is taken from him as a remuneration (for his sins), and set right whatever problem he might have in his

(work.(۴

God will give the reward of a good deed to a person for intending to do a good act .۵ even if he actually fails

p: ۶۸

.Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۱, p. ۳۹ -۱
.Ghurar al-Hikam -۲
.Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۸, p. ۱۰۷ -۳
Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon ۱۷۸: “By Allah, no people are deprived of the pleasures of -۴ life after enjoying them, except as a result of sins committed by them, because certainly Allah is not unjust to His creatures. Even then, when calamities descend upon people and pleasures depart from them, they turn towards Allah with the true intention and the feeling in their hearts, He will return everything that vanished from ”.them and cure all their ills

to do so. By having a sincere intention, the unfulfilled works of a person shall be counted, as it has been narrated in the traditions: If a faithful person would say, ‘If God had given amenities to me, I would have done this and that’, and if this wish is (sincere, God will grant him the reward of those deeds.(۱

Even if he sincerely wishes for martyrdom and prays to God for his martyrdom, God will grant him the station of a martyr though he departs from this world on his bed.(۲) It is enough of a favor that God will give reward for a decision to do a good deed, but regarding an intention to commit a sin, He will not set a punishment for it unless it is (actually done.(۳

A pure intention can make the most materialistic affairs of life a means for man’s .۶ nearness {qurb} to Allah. In the same manner, the most spiritual states such as prostration {sujud} and weeping, if they are motivated by ostentation {riya’}, will turn .into a means of drifting away from God

We read in the traditions: Just as the body having a soul is firm, religion with a sincere

intention is firm.(۴) Having a pure heart and good intention are among the divine assets and treasures, and the better the intention the more the value this treasure will have.(۵) Having a serious intention, decision and will power will multiply the .physical ability of man

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "On the

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۱, p. ۴۰ -۱

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۰, p. ۲۰۱ -۲

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۱, p. ۴۰ -۳

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۸, p. ۳۱۲ -۴

.Ghurar al-Hikam -۵

Day of Resurrection, God will group the people according to the intentions they (have."(۱

For one whose aim is the performance of a duty, it is not important for him the type of ,work and its outcome. As the Qur'an says

(وَ مَنْ يُقاتِلْ فِى سَبِيلِ اللّهِ فَيُقْتَلْ أَوْ يَغْلِبْ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا)

And whoever fights in the way of Allah, and then is slain or conquers, soon We shall" (give him a great reward."(۲

What is important is to struggle in the way of God, but as to whether its outcome is defeat or victory has no effect on the divine reward. In another place, the Qur'an :states

(وَ مَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهاجِرًا إِلَى اللّهِ وَ رَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللّهِ)

And whoever leaves his home migrating toward Allah and His Apostle, and is then" (overtaken by death, his reward shall certainly fall on Allah."(۳

It can also be readily inferred from this verse that if a person leaves his home for the

sake of God, even though he does not reach his destination, he would be rewarded. What is important is the intention behind the act and not the act itself. What is important is to take a step along the way and not reaching the destination.

The Messenger of Allah (S) said to Abu Dharr: "Decide to do a good deed though you might not succeed in doing so; for, it is this decision that will take you out from the circle of

---

۱- Qassar al-Jamal.
۲- Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۷۴.
۳- Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۱۰۰.

the neglectful."(۱)

We read in another hadith: "Any deed which is accompanied by a divine intention is great even if that work is simple and trivial."(۲)

On the contrary, the most important deeds, if they are not based on correct intentions, have no value. The Prophet (S) said: "Most of the martyrs of my ummah will depart from this world while lying on their beds while there are many who will be killed on the battlefield but God is aware of their intentions."(۳)

During the Tabuk expedition, the Holy Prophet of Islam (S) said: "Indeed, those who are in Medina but wish to participate with us in the battlefield shall share in the spiritual reward on account of that intention."(۴)

Also, in another tradition we read: Anyone who goes to his bed with the intention of waking up to say the night supererogatory prayers, if he remains in his bed and is not able to wake up, God will treat his sleep as charity and his breathing as glorification (of God) {tasbih} and give him the reward of saying the night supererogatory prayers.(۵)

It is not without reason that we have been admonished to have sacred aims even in eating and sleeping.(۶) And if you love a person for the sake of God and imagine him

(as a good person, even if he is actually a dweller of hell, you are excused.(۷

{The pre–eminence of intention {niyyah} over action {'amal

The pre-eminence the intention behind an action possesses over the action itself is {'that in the performance of action, sometimes ostentation {riya

---

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۱, p. ۳۹ -۱

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۱, p. ۸۷ -۲

.Muhajjah al-Bayda' vol. ۸, p. ۱۰۳ -۳

.Muhajjah al-Bayda' vol. ۸, p. ۱۰۴ -۴

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۰, p. ۲۰۶ -۵

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۱, p. ۳۵ -۶

.Muhajjah al-Bayda' vol. ۴, p. ۳۷۴ -۷

and showing off are at work, but in the intention—since it is an inner matter and has no outward appearance—there is no place for ostentation, showing off and the like. The other advantage of intention over action is that it is always possible in all places and requires no particular conditions, but performance of an action requires many .prerequisites and contingencies

In the traditions, there is a category known as "man bala'" traditions. This group of traditions states: If somebody hears a tradition which states that such an act has a reward and he performs it, God will grant him that reward even if that tradition is not .correct. It is because one who has done so did it with a good intention

The degrees of intention

Sometimes, fear of divine wrath or desire for divine favor prompts man to perform .۱ (an act. As the Qur'an says in this regard, "And supplicate Him with fear and hope."(۱

And in another place, the Qur'an states: "And they would supplicate Us with (eagerness and awe."(۲

۲. A higher degree of intention is that man performs an act on account of gratitude for His favors whether he earns reward or punishment from God. As Hadrat ‘Ali (‘a) says:

لَوْ لَمْ يَتَوَعَّدَ اللهُ عَلىٰ مَعْصِيَتِهِ لَكانَ يَجِبُ اَلاّ يُعْصىٰ شُكْراً لِنِعْمَتِهِ.

“Even if Allah had not warned of the chastisement of those disobedient to Him, it was obligatory by way of gratefulness for His favors that He should not be disobeyed.”(۳)

۳. An even higher degree of intention is that without desiring

p: ۷۲

۱- Surah al-A‘raf ۷:۵۶.

۲- Surah al-Anbiya’ ۲۱:۹۰.

۳- Nahj al-Balaghah, Saying ۲۹۰.

paradise and being afraid of hell, man worships God as he regards Him as the only Being worthy of worship and adoration.

۴. The highest degree of intention is that the love for God drives man to perform an act. In this regard, ‘Ali (‘a) considers his love for death and meeting Allah as more intense than the fondness of an infant for the breast of its mother.(۱) And Hadrat al-Qasim, son of Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (‘a) says in Karbala’: “For me, death in the way of God is sweeter than honey.”

The role of intention on the penal issues

On the question of punishment, Islam also takes motive and intention into account.

Concerning murder, the penalty for a person who kills another intentionally is distinct from the penalty for one who kills another unintentionally. Each of these two cases has its own particular ruling.(۲)

With regard to swearing an oath, the Qur’an also says:

(لا يُؤاخِذُكُمُ اللّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فى أَيْمانِكُمْ)

"Allah shall not take you to task for what is unconsidered in your oaths."(3)

Therefore, if someone gives an oath but he has no serious intention and motive, his oath has no value.

{Gnosis {ma'rifah} as the preliminary step toward the intention for nearness {qurbah}

The best way of acquiring the motive for nearness {qurbah} to Allah and a pure intention is gnosis {ma'rifah} and cognition.

- If we only knew, acquiring the endearment of people is in the hands of God.(4)
- If we only knew, honor and power are only through His hands.(5)
- If we only knew, benefit and harm to us are not in the hands of others.(6)
- If we only knew, work

۱- Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon ۵.

۲- Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۹۲-۹۳: "Anyone who kills a believer by mistake should set free a believing slave, and pay blood-money to his (the victim's) family, unless they remit it in charity... Should anyone kill a believer intentionally, his requital shall be hell, to remain in it {forever}; Allah shall be wrathful at him and curse him and He shall prepare for him a great punishment."

۳- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۲۲۵.

۴- Surah Ibrahim ۱۴:۳۷: "Our Lord! ...So make the hearts of a part of the people fond of them (Abraham's descendants), and provide them with fruits, that they may give thanks."

۵- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۱۶۵.

۶- Munajat ash-Sha'baniyyah.

for the sake of God has sometimes double, ten times, or seventy times its reward. So, we should not work for the sake of other than Him.

- If we only knew, the elevation of social status does not mean glory because black smoke also goes up!
- If we only knew, the attention and opinion of the people to us have no value because if an elephant would pass by the street, everybody will also look at it!
- If we only knew, we would pay attention to the perils and ignominies of our ostentations!
- If we only knew, there will be a day for us when one's call will not reach the other and only those who have sound hearts shall attain deliverance.(١)
- And if we only knew what values we shall lose by having corrupt intentions, we would prepare ourselves for the sincere performance of work based on the motive of nearness {qurbah} to Allah.

The effects of corrupt intentions

Concluding the discussion on intention, we shall also cite the adverse effects of having corrupt intentions, just as we earlier stated the blessings of a sound intention.

١. Non-acceptance of supplication {du'a'}. Imam as-Sajjad ('a) says: "A bad intention causes the non-acceptance of supplications."(٢)

Having an ungodly intention not only removes the divine color and devotional nature of actions; it also entails perils.

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "If somebody borrows a certain amount of money without the intention of returning it, it is equivalent to stealing."(٣) Similarly, if in marriage the person has no intention of giving the

---

١- Surah ash-Shu'ara' ٢۶:٨٨-٨٩: "The day (Day of Resurrection) when neither wealth nor children will avail, except him who comes to Allah with a sound heart."

٢- Surah al-Anwar, vol. ٧٠, p. ٣٧۵.

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۱۲, p. ۸۶ -۳

(dower {mahriyyah} to his wife, in the sight of God he is committing adultery {zina}.(۱

Deprivation of sustenance {rizq}. Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "So many believers have .۲ ".{the intention of committing sin and God deprives them of sustenance {rizq

An actual example of this hadith is the story of a garden which has been narrated in :the Qur'an

In Surah al-Qalam, verses ۱۶-۳۰, there has been narrated the story of a people who owned a garden and who intended to harvest its yields in the dark so that the poor would remain unaware of their action and they would not have to give any of the .fruits to them

As the dawn came they went to the garden. They saw that the garden had been burned and turned into ashes. Initially, they imagined that they had lost the way, but the wisest among them said: "Did I not remind you not to have such an intention? You ".had the intention of depriving the poor. Now, God deprived you of it as well

From this Qur'anic account, it can be understood that sometimes God gives a sort of .penalty on account of our motive and intention.(۲) Of course, this is not a general rule

It causes wretchedness and misfortune. Hadrat 'Ali ('a) says: "A corrupt intention is .۳ (a sign of wretchedness."(۳

The blessing of life and daily living is taken away. In another place, Hadrat 'Ali ('a) .۴ :says

عِنْدَ فَسادَ النِّیّه تَرْتَفعُ الْبَرَکه.

That is, God will take away the blessing

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۱۵, p. ۲۲ -۱

Someone thus narrated to me: “I met one of the disabled war veterans (during the -٢ ١٩٨٠-٨٨ Iraqi imposed war against Iran), who was sitting in a wheelchair. I approached and kissed him. As he smelled my perfume, he asked me to give him my perfume. I said: ‘I will buy one for you and I will keep this one.’ At any rate, I did not give it to him and we parted ways. An hour later, I went to the toilet and the bottle of perfume fell into the toilet bowl. All of a sudden, I realized that this was a penalty for my stinginess and right there, I wept for my (miserable) state.” Yes, we will suppose to have so much regret and remorse on the Day of Resurrection since we have done nothing for .God

.Ghurar al-Hikam, hadith ١۶١٠ -٣

from the person whose intention is not sound and he will not be able to make good (use of divine favors.(١)

It is narrated that it was said to someone: “On account of your good work, you have three acceptable supplications.” He was glad and said: “O God! Make my wife the most beautiful woman in the world.” His wife became very beautiful but his life became bitter because he realized that everyone was staring at his wife. He therefore made ”.his second supplication: “O God! Make my wife the ugliest woman in the world

His supplication was granted but his life became intolerable with such an ugliness. So, he made his third and last acceptable supplication, saying: “O God! Let my wife return to her original condition.” His supplication was heard and his wife returned to her original state. He made his three accepted supplication but he earned no benefit at all. This is the meaning of taking away blessings from a person and as such, he cannot .make good use of the facilities at his disposal

Takbirah al-Ihram

{Allahu akbar {Allah is greater

The first utterance which is obligatory for the pilgrims {hujjaj} to the House of God is the recital of labbayk(٢) the recital of which signals the commencement of their Hajj .rituals and this state also makes a series of things forbidden for them

In the same token, prayer commences with the recital of “Allahu akbar” {Allah is greater} and this makes such things as eating, drinking and talking, forbidden {haram} for the

---

.Ghurar al-Hikam, hadith ۱۶۱۵ -۱

Labbayk {Here I am}: In full, Labbayk, allahumma labbayk, labbayka la sharika laka -۲ labbayk, inna’l-hamda wa’n-ni‘mata laka wa’l-mulka la sharika laka labbayk {“Here I am, O Lord, here I am, You indeed have no partner, here I am. No doubt, all praise and bounties are Yours, and so is the absolute Domain. You indeed have no partners, here I am”}. Recited in Arabic, it is the talbiyyah, proclaimed immediately after wearing the ihram (white garment) that signifies the beginning of the hajj rituals. {.{Trans

person praying. Thus, the first takbir (utterance of Allahu akbar) in prayer is called .Takbirah al-Ihram

Along the way to Mecca, the pilgrims repeat the recital of labbayk whenever they reach any upward and downward slope. This repetition is recommended or optional {mustahabb}. In every bending and standing upright, standing and sitting, it is .mustahabb for the one praying to repeat the recital of Allahu akbar

.Allahu akbar” is the first obligatory utterance in the morning“

It is the first phrase in the form of adhan and iqamah that a Muslim infant hears at the time of birth, and it is also the last phrase that is recited for the dead (in the prayer of .the dead {salah al-mayyit}) before he is buried

It is the only recital which is obligatory {wajib} in prayer as well as an essential pillar .{rukn} of prayer

.It is the first sentence of the Muslim hymn, i.e. adhan

It is the much repeated recital at the commencement of prayer, during the prayer and

afterward, such that throughout the day the Muslim repeats it ۳۶۰ times during the five daily obligatory prayers (not including the mustahabb prayers) as shown below:

۱. For each of the five daily prayers, the adhan is recited and in every adhan, "Allahu akbar" is repeated six times (۳۰ times in all).

۲. For each of the five daily prayers, the iqamah is recited and in every iqamah, "Allahu akbar" is repeated four times (۲۰ times in all).

۳. Before the Takbirah al-Ihram in each of the

five daily prayers, there are six mustahabb takbir and the seventh takbir constitutes that obligatory Takbirah al-Ihram (۳۰ times in all).

۴. The Takbirah al-Ihram at the beginning of prayers is repeated five times daily.

۵. There is one takbir prior to every ruku' {bowing down} in the ۱۷ rak'ahs {cycles} of the five daily prayers (۱۷ times in all).

۶. In each of the ۱۷ rak'ahs of prayers we have two sujuds {prostrations} for each of which it is mustahabb to recite takbir—before and after the sujud (۶۸ times in all).

۷. Every prayer has a qunut prior to which there is a takbir (۵ times in all).

۸. At the end of each of the five daily prayers, there are three takbirs (۱۵ times in all).

۹. After every prayer, we recite takbir ۳۴ times as part of the Tasbihat Hadrat Fatimah az-Zahra ('a) (۱۷۰ times in all).

Yet, what a pity that throughout our lives, we have not recited "Allahu akbar" with attention; for, if every day a person would recite "Allah is greater" with faith and perfect attention more than ۳۶۰ times, he will no longer be afraid of any power, superpower or conspiracy.

Takbir in other prayers

In the ‘Id al-Fitr(1) and ‘Id al-Qurban(2) prayers, not only in the prayers but also before and after the prayers, takbir constitutes all the chants.

In the Salah al-Ayat {Prayer for Signs},(3) we have five ruku‘ and there is takbir for each ruku‘.

In the Salah al-Mayyit {Prayer for the Dead} also, five takbirs essentially constitute a pillar of the prayer.

How we should recite the takbir in prayer

Islam

---

١ - Id al-Fitr: the Islamic feast marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. {Trans.}

٢- Id al-Qurban (Feast of Sacrifice): the Islamic feast marking the end of the Hajj‘ rituals in the month of Dhu’l-Hijjah, which is associated with the offering of animals for sacrifice. {Trans.}

٣ - Salah al-Ayat: obligatory prayer for signs or natural phenomena such as a solar eclipse, a lunar eclipse, earthquakes, thunder and lightning, etc. {Trans.}

has explained the etiquette for every action. In the recital of “Allahu akbar” some rules must also be observed such as the following:

١. During the recital of takbir in prayer, we should raise both our hands parallel to our ears in such a manner that once both hands become parallel to the ears, the takbir has already been recited.

Imam ar-Rida (‘a) said: “The movement of the hands during the recital of takbir is effective in focusing the attention and having complete devotion and sincerity in supplication to God.”(1)

٢. The fingers of the hands during takbir should be stretched together upward.

.The palms of the hands must be facing the qiblah .۳

The traditions have described the raising of the hands during takbir as the adornment (of prayer.(۲

The meaning of takbir

Allahu akbar implies that God is superior to all tangible and intangible, temporal and .celestial beings

.Allahu akbar means that God is greater than that which one could describe

ای برتر از خیال و قیاس و گمان و وهم

وز هرچه گفته‌ایم و شنیدیم و خوانده‌ایم

مجلس تمام گشت و به پایان رسید عمر

ما همچنان در اوّل وصف تو مانده‌ایم

O He who is beyond imagination, analogy, illusion, and fancy! The gathering was finished and our lifespan came to an end. Yet, we are still at the beginning of .describing You based on what we have said, heard and read

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) says: “When you are reciting the takbir, everything must be (insignificant in your sight except Him.”(۳

That a person would recite the takbir with

.Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۴, p. ۷۲۷ -۱
.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۴, p. ۳۵۱ -۲
.Sirr as-Salah, p. ۷۸ -۳

his tongue while his heart is attached to something else is a lie and a deception, and .because of this, God takes the sweetness of remembrance {dhikr} from him

The recital of “Allahu akbar” has been customary not only in prayer but rather in many affairs and situations. During the early period of Islam the Muslims used to recite the takbir both in times of prosperity and adversity. For example:

1. During the Battle of the Trench {khandaq}, the Muslims came across a firm rock while they were digging the trench. The pick was broken but not the rock. The Prophet (S) came and crushed the rock with a blow. The Muslims recited the takbir in unison and right there the Prophet (S) said: “I saw the fall of the Byzantine and the Persian castles in the sparks and sparkles of the rocks.”(1)

2. During the Battle of Siffin, ‘Ali (‘a) used to recite the takbir whenever he slew an enemy. By counting the number of takbirs, the Muslims would know the number of those whom he had sent to hellfire.(2)

3. On the night when Fatimah az-Zahra (‘a) was sent to the house of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) (after the wedding), 70 thousand angels came down to chant the takbir.(3)

4. Our Holy Prophet (S) recited 40 takbirs over the body of Fatimah bint al-Asad (mother of Imam ‘Ali (‘a))(4) and 70 takbirs over the body of his uncle Hamzah.(5)

5. During the Hajj rituals, it is mustahabb to recite takbir with every

---

1- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 20, p. 190.

2- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 32, p. 60.

3- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43, p. 104.

4- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 35, p. 70.

5- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 20, p. 63.

stone that is thrown at the representations of Satan.(1)

6. In the Tasbihat Hadrat Fatimah az-Zahra (‘a) whose reward is equivalent to a

(thousand rak'ahs of mustahabb prayers, ۳۴ takbirs are included.(۲

When the Holy Prophet (S) was born, the first sentence he was able to utter was .۷ ("Mubarakahu Allahu akbar" {Blessed is He; Allah is greater}.(۳

When Mecca fell into the hands of the Muslims, the Prophet (S) entered the Masjid .۸ al-Haram, pointed to the Hajar al-Aswad {Black Stone}, and recited the takbir. The Muslims also recited the same takbir which brought fear into the hearts of the (polytheists.(۴

We read in the traditions: "Whenever a certain thing astonishes you, recite the .۹ (takbir."(۵

During the Battle of Uhud, one of the leading warriors amog the infidels asked for a .۱۰ challenger. Hadrat 'Ali ('a) came forward and he dealt the enemy such a heavy blow (that the Prophet (S) and the Muslims recited the takbir with a loud voice.(۶

The Holy Prophet (S) said to Hadrat 'Ali ('a): "Whenever you look at the crescent .۱۱ ({hilal} or the mirror, or you encounter a problem, say takbir three times."(۷

Allahu akbar" was the slogan of Zayd, son of Imam as-Sajjad ('a), who revolted" .۱۲ (against the 'Umayyad rule.(۸

During the Battle of Badr, the Prophet (S) was awaiting the news of the death of .۱۳ Nawfal, one of the enemy chiefs. When he (S) was informed that Hadrat 'Ali ('a) had (slain Nawfal, the Prophet (S) recited the takbir.(۹

When Hadrat 'Ali ('a) came .۱۴

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۱۱, p. ۱۶۸ -۱

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۱۵, p. ۲۴۸ -۲

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۱۵, p. ۲۷۳ -۳

.Tafsir-e Nemuneh, vol. ۲۷, p. ۳۰۷ -۴

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٩٢, p. ١٢٧ -٥

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٢٠, p. ١٢۶ -۶

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٩٢, p. ١۴۵ -٧

.Zayd ibn 'Ali, p. ١٨۶ -٨

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ١٩, p. ٢٨١ -٩

to propose for Hadrat Zahra ('a), the Prophet (S) said: "You wait. I have to refer the matter to my daughter Fatimah. But when she was consulted, Hadrat Zahra ('a) remained silent and did not say anything. The Prophet said: "Allahu akbar! Sukutuha iqraruha" {Allah is greater! Her silence is her approval}.(١)

During the battle against the Khawarij (Kharijites), when their commander .١۵ perished, Hadrat 'Ali ('a) recited takbir and performed prostration, and all the people recited takbir.(٢)

A group of Jews embraced Islam and they said to the Prophet (S): "The previous .١۶ prophets had successors. Who is the executor of your will {wasi}?" At this juncture, the following Verse of Guardianship {ayah al-wilayah} was revealed:

(إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلاَةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ)

"Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down."(٣)

The Prophet (S) said, "Let us go to the mosque." When they arrived, they saw a beggar who was glad because Hadrat 'Ali ('a) while in the state of ruku' in prayer had given him his ring. At that moment the Prophet (S) recited takbir.(۴)

Recital of takbir at the time of entering into the holy shrines of the infallible Imams .١٧ has been enjoined. Similarly, before reading Ziyarat Jami'ah, we recite ١٠٠ takbirs in three stages. According to the late Majlisi, the reason for all these takbirs is perhaps for us not to indulge in extremism {ghuluww} with regard to the

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۳, p. ۹۳ -۱
.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۱, p. ۳۴۱ -۲
.Surah al-Ma'idah ۵:۵۵ -۳
.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۳۵, p. ۱۸۳ -۴

(Imams ('a) as described in the sentences contained in the Ziyarat Jami'ah.(۱

In his judgments, whenever Hadrat 'Ali ('a) identified the criminal, he would recite .۱۸ (takbir.(۲

Maytham at-Tammar was hung at the order of 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad and then .۱۹ attacked with spears for the crime of siding with Hadrat 'Ali ('a). At the moment of his (martyrdom, he was reciting takbir while the blood flowed from his mouth.(۳

During the ascension {mi'raj}, the Prophet recited takbir at every heaven he .۲۰ (passed by.(۴

Jibra'il (Archangel Gabriel) ('a) was beside the Prophet (S) when Hadrat 'Ali ('a) .۲۱ came in. Jibra'il ('a) said: "O Muhammad! By God who appointed you as the Prophet! Compared to the dwellers of the earth, the inhabitants of the heavens are better and more familiar with this 'Ali. Whenever he recites takbir in the battles, we angels recite (it along with him."(۵

During the Battle of Khaybar, when the Muslims entered the fortress, they recited .۲۲ (the takbir so much that the Jews had to flee.(۶

Surah al-Fatihah

point

After the recital of Takbirah al-Ihram, Surah al-Fatihah is to be recited and if this surah is not recited in the prayer, the prayer is invalid. "There is no prayer without the (Opening of the Book {fatihah al-kitab}."(۷

The other name of this surah is the Opening of the Book {fatihah al-kitab} because the Qur'an begins with this surah. This surah has seven verses(۸) and according to the

tradition of the Most Noble Messenger (S) on the authority of

p: ۸۳

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۱۶, p. ۹۹ -۱

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۰, p. ۲۶۰ -۲

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴۲, p. ۱۲۵ -۳

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۶, p. ۲۰۷ -۴

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۳۹, p. ۹۸ -۵

.Payambari va Hukumat {Prophethood and Governance}, p. ۱۳۶ -۶

.Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, hadith ۴۳۶۵ -۷

The number "seven" is the number of the heavens, the days of the week, the - ۸ circumambulation {tawaf} of the Ka'bah, sa'i {brisk walking or jogging} between the mounts of Safa and Marwah, and the number of stones to be thrown at the .representations of Satan during the Hajj rituals

(Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah al-Ansari, it is the best surah of the Qur'an.(۱

Surah al-Fatihah is the only surah which is obligatory upon every Muslim to recite at .least ten times daily in his five obligatory prayers

Concerning the importance of this surah, it is enough to say that it is narrated in the traditions: "If you recite this surah ۷۰ times for the dead person and he revives, do not (be surprised."(۲

From the name, "Opening of the Book" {fatihah al-kitab} of this surah, it is clear that all the verses of the Qur'an were compiled during the time of the Prophet (S) and formed into a book and at his order this surah was placed at the beginning of the Book. The verses of the blessed Surah al-Hamd (or, Fatihah) are about God and His attributes, the issue of the Resurrection {ma'ad}, request for guidance on the path of truth, and the acceptance of the sovereignty {hakimiyyah} and lordship {rububiyyah} .of God

Also, in this surah we express our interest to tread the path of the saints of God and

aversion and disavowal of the misguided ones and those who have earned the divine .wrath

Surah al-Fatihah is the source of remedies—a cure for both physical ailments and spiritual maladies. In his book, Tafsir Fatihah al-Kitab, the late ‘Allamah Amini has .narrated many traditions in this regard

The instructive lessons of Surah al-Fatihah

By reciting Surah al-Fatihah, man cuts his hope from other than God by saying, .١ .{“Bismillah” {In the Name of Allah

By saying “Rabbi’l-‘alamin” {Lord .٢

.Tafsir Kanz ad-Daqa’iq -١

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٩٢, p. ٢۵٧ -٢

of all the worlds} and “Maliki yawmi’d-din” {Master of the Day of Retribution}, he feels .{that he is the servant {marbub} and the one who is ruled {mamluk

By reciting the phrase, “Rabbi’l-‘alamin,” he establishes a connection between . ٣ .himself and the universe

By “Ar-rahmani’r-rahim” {the All-beneficent, the All-merciful}, he see himself under .۴ .the aegis of His vast favor

By “Maliki yawmi’d-din” {Master of the Day of Retribution}, his negligence of the .۵ .Day of Resurrection will be erased

By “Iyyaka na‘bud” {You {alone} do we worship}, he abandons his selfishness and .۶ .desire for fame

By “Iyyaka nasta‘in” {to You {alone} do we turn for help}, he removes from his mind .٧ .the idea of seeking help from other than God

۸. By “An‘amta ‘alayhim” {You have blessed}, he understands that the distribution of favors lies in His hand and envy must be abandoned because the envious one in reality is not satisfied with God’s manner of deciding on and allocating sustenance.

۹. By “Ihdina’s-sirata’l-mustaqim” {Guide us on the straight path}, he wants to ask for firmness in treading the path of truth.

۱۰. By “Sirat alladhina an‘amta ‘alayhim” {the path of those whom You have blessed}, he declares his solidarity with those who have traversed the way of God.

۱۱. And finally, by “Ghayri’l-maghdubi ‘alayhim wa la’d-dallin” {such as have not incurred Your wrath, nor are astray, he declares disavowal of falsehood and the people of falsehood.

Bismillahi’r-rahmani’r-rahim {In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful}

Among various peoples and communities, there is a custom of beginning an important work with the

p: ۸۵

name of one of the leading figures of that community who is respected and admired, so that the task would be started and pursued with blessing and auspiciousness.

Of course, each person acts according to his or her correct or corrupt ideas and beliefs. Some people commence their tasks with the name of idols and taghuts while others do the same with the name and assistance of God and the saints of God. Nowadays, it has become the custom that in constructing important buildings, distinguished figures are the first to strike the pickaxe on the ground. Prior to the Battle of the Trench, the Holy Prophet (S) was also the first to break the ground in digging the trenches.

Bismillah {In the Name of Allah} is the beginning of the book of revelation. Bismillah is not only the beginning of the Qur’an but rather the beginning of all heavenly

scriptures. Bismillah has been the epigraph of the work of all the prophets ('a). When the ark of Nuh (Noah) ('a) was about to set out amidst the waves in the storm, he asked his followers to embark and then he said: "In the Name of Allah it shall set sail (and cast anchor."(١)

When Hadrat Sulayman (Solomon) ('a) invited the Queen of Sheba (Bilqis) toward God, he began his invitation letter with the phrase, Bismillahi'r-rahmani'r-rahim {In the (Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful}.(٢)

Hadrat 'Ali ('a) says: "Bismillah is the source of blessing in work, and abandoning it leads to the lack

---

١- Surah Hud ١١:۴١.

٢- Surah an-Naml ٢٧:٣٠: "It is from Solomon, and it begins in the name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful."

(of success of affairs."(١)

He ('a) also said to someone who was writing the phrase, "Bismillah": "Jawwiduha" ({Inscribe it well}.(٢)

The recital of "Bismillah" at the beginning of every work has been enjoined—eating, sleeping, riding on an animal (or a vehicle); marriage and matrimony, and many other tasks. Even if an animal is slaughtered without the utterance of "Bismillah", consumption of its meat is unlawful {haram}. The secret behind this is that the food of a goal-oriented religious person must also have a divine connection.

Why do we start each task with "Bismillah?"

The products of a factory have the special logo and emblem of that factory. For example, a porcelain-producing factory puts its logo on all its wares, both big and small. Every country has its own flag hoisted above offices and garrisons, on ships and on office tables. In the same manner, the name of God and His remembrance is also

the logo and emblem of the Muslim and the phrase, "Bismillah" is the symbol and code .of the Muslim

In every activity, big and small; everywhere, in the mosque or factory; and anytime, in the morning or evening, this blessed phrase is uttered by Muslims, and thus, we read in the hadith: "Do not forget bismillah even in writing a couplet of a poem." Traditions about the reward of a person who teaches bismillah to a child have also been (narrated.(۳

?{Is Bismillahi'r-rahmani'r-rahim a part of Surah al-Fatihah and a distinct verse {ayah

Although some individuals have not regarded it as part

p: ۸۷

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۶, p. ۳۸۵ -۱

.Kanz al-'Ummal, hadith ۲۹۵۵۸ -۲

.Tafsir Burhan, vol. ۱, p. ۴۳ -۳

of the surah or have abandoned mentioning it in the prayer, these people have been subjected to criticism by Muslims. For example, one day, Mu'awiyah did not mention bismillahi'r-rahmani'r-rahim in the prayer, and the people strongly protested, saying: ("Did you steal an ayah or forget it?"(۱

In his tafsir {Qur'anic exegesis}, Fakhr ar-Razi enumerates ۱۶ proofs substantiating the fact that bismillahi'r-rahmani'r-rahim is a constitutive part of Surah al-Fatihah and Alusi also expresses this view in his tafsir. Ahmad ibn Hanbal has equally stated in .his Musnad that bismillahi'r-rahmani'r-rahim is a part of the surah

According to the Ahl al-Bayt(۲) ('a) of the Messenger of Allah (S) who were a hundred years senior to the leading fuqaha {jurists} of the Ahl as-Sunnah, who attained martyrdom in the way of Allah and whose infallibility {ismah} and purity have also been stipulated in the Qur'an, the phrase, bismillahi'r-rahmani'r-rahim, is itself a .distinct verse and is part of the surah

The infallible Imams ('a) insisted on reciting aloud bismillahi'r-rahmani'r-rahim during prayer. Imam al-Baqir ('a) thus says regarding those who were not reciting it during prayer or not regarding it as part of the surah: "They stole the best ayah!"(۳)

In his commentary on Surah al-Fatihah, 'Allamah Shahid Mutahhari identifies Ibn al-'Abbas, 'Asim, Kasa'i, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn Zubayr, 'Ata', Tawus, Fakhr ar-Razi, and as-Suyuti as among those who have regarded bismillahi'r-rahmani'r-rahim as part of the surah.

Of course, there is no bismillahi'r-rahmani'r-rahim at the beginning of Surah al-Bara'ah (Surah at-Tawbah). According to Hadrat 'Ali ('a), it is because bismillahi'r-rahmani'r-rahim

p: ۸۸

۱- Mustadrak al-Hakim, vol. ۳, p. ۲۳۳.

۲- Ahl al-Bayt: according to authentic hadiths recorded in both the Sunni and Shi'ah sources, the term Ahl al-Bayt, and interchangeably Itrah and Al, is a blessed Qur'anic appellation that belongs exclusively to the Prophet, 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husayn ('a). The members of this Family of five, with the Prophet Muhammad (S) at its head, were the ones alive at the time the Qur'anic verses regarding their virtue were being revealed to the Prophet (S). However, nine other Imams from the descendants of Imam al-Husayn ('a) are also included in this chosen Family, the final one being Imam al-Mahdi ('a). {Trans.}

۳- Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, vol. ۳, p. ۱۷۷; vol. ۴, p. ۸۵.

is a phrase of security and mercy and it is not consistent with the declaration of disavowal {bara'ah} of the polytheists.

Bismillah {In the Name of Allah}

- Bismillah is the indicator of divine baptism {sibghat Allah}, and the mark of our monotheistic orientation.

- Bismillah is the code of tawhid {monotheism} while the name of others is the code of

kufr {infidelity} and the name of God along with others is the sign of shirk {polytheism}. We should not place the name of others beside the Name of God or put the names of others in the place of God's Name. The meaning of "Celebrate the Name of your Lord"(١) is that even the Name of God should also be free from any sort of .polytheism

• Bismillah is the secret of eternity and perpetuity, and anything that is devoid of the "divine color" is perishable.(٢)

• .Bismillah is the code of love for God and reliance on Him

• Bismillah is the code for keeping aloof from vanity and the expression of impotence .in the presence of God

• .Bismillah is the code for ensuring actions with the name of God

• .Bismillah is the code for the sanctification of actions

• Bismillah is the code for the perpetual remembrance and glorification of God—"O ".God! I will never forget You in any situation

• Bismillah is the expression of man's objective—"O God! You are my aim; not the .people, not the world and not capricious desires

• .Bismillah means that we seek help from Him alone and not from others

• Bismillah is

p: ٨٩

١- ٨٧:١ Surah al-A'la.

٢- Surah al-Qasas ٢٨:٨٨: "Everything is to perish except His Face."

indicative of the fact that the content of the surah has been revealed from the Genesis of Truth {mabda'-e haqq} and the Embodiment of Mercy {mazhar-e .{rahmat

aliha" meaning" "اَلِهَ" Some people have regarded the word "Allah" to be derived from abada". By "Allah" they mean the Real Worshipped Being who has all the"" "عَبَدَ" "وَلِهَ" perfections. Others, however, have regarded it to have been derived from waliha" with the meaning of adoration, love and amazement. Therefore, the word" ."Allah" means the Sacred Essence whose bliss has astounded and fascinated all

Khodavand" ("God" in Persian)" "خداوند" Khoda" or" "خدا" It must be noted that the word is not a perfect translation of the word "Allah" because "Khoda" originates from khuday" which is termed in philosophy as the Necessary Being {wajib al-" "خودآى" wujud} while the word "Khodavand" also means "Owner". For example, in the Persian ."literature, we say, "khodavand-e khaneh" to mean "owner of the house

The meaning "owner" or "necessary being" falls short of conveying the meaning of "Allah". "Allah" means the Essence that is worthy of love and worship because It .possesses all the perfections

In the Qur'an, approximately one hundred Names of God have been mentioned, among which "Allah" is the most comprehensive one. In principle, each of the Names .of God points to one of His Attributes, and not just one sign and symbol for God

The names of individuals are diverse. Some names are only symbols and are in no way compatible with the character of the person in

p:٩٠

question; in fact, one's name is sometimes repugnant to one's character such as a liar !{whose name is Sadiq {truthful

There are also times, nevertheless, when the name of a person, apart from it being his own name is also an exact description of himself, pointing to his attributes and .excellences such as the name "Sadiq" for a truthful person

Some names are like the alarm of a clock which only indicates the arrival of a certain

period of time. Others, however, are similar to the voice of the mu‘adhdhin {caller to prayer} which is both symbol and substance.

The Qur’an says:

“To Allah belong the Best Names.”(1)

In the traditions, 99 names of God have been mentioned which are described as Asma’ al-Husna {the Best Names} and it is stated that anyone who would pray to God with these Names, his request shall be granted.(2) And in the Du‘a’ Jawshan Kabir, we call on God with a thousand Names and Attributes.

The presence of the words, “rahman” {All-beneficent} and “rahim” {All-merciful} after the word “Allah” signifies that man commences his work with hope for divine favor and mercy and considers God as the source of all hopes and mercies.

Beginning an action with expressions of mercy signifies that the divine foundation and basis is anchored on mercy and grace, and it is only fitting for man to seek assistance from the Fountainhead of Mercy.

Rahman is a name exclusive for God because it is only His beneficence which is universal, all-encompassing and perpetual.

1- Surah al-A‘raf 7:180.
2- Tafsir Nemuneh, vol. 7, p. 27.

Others either have no beneficence {rahmah} or what they have is not all-encompassing. In addition, if others would ever give something, it is because they expect worldly or otherworldly rewards; they give grass in order to get milk!

Regarding the words, “ar-rahman” and “ar-rahim”, we shall elaborate on them under the verse, “ar-rahmani’r-rahim.”

“Al-hamdulillah” {All praise belongs to Allah}

The words, “madah,” “shukr,” and “hamd” have identical meanings, but each of them also has its own particular meaning. For instance, the word “madah” means “to praise” regardless of whether the praise is worthy, based on flattery or something unworthy, or whether on account of one’s excellences, fear, covetousness, beguiling, or .ingratiation

The word “shukr” means gratitude for the grace and favor given by others to someone. In the word “hamd,” however, apart from gratitude and thanks, another meaning is latent and that is worship. Gratitude and thanks to the extent of worship is “hamd”. Hence, to express “madah” and “shukr” to others is permissible, but “hamd” is .exclusive for God because He is the Only One worthy of worship

Al-hamdullillah” is followed by four descriptions of God: “rabb al-‘alamin,” “ar-“ rahman,” “ar-rahim,” and “maliki yawmid-din” which indicate that on account of these divine favors and grandeur, man has to express “hamd” to God. But before all these descriptions, the word “lillah” {belonging to Allah} appears. It means that “hamd” is solely for Him and as He is the Only One worthy of “hamd,” those descriptions can also .be assumed even if they had not appeared afterward

گر از دوست چشمت

به احسان اوست

تو در بند خویشی نه در بند دوست

If your eyes are focusing on the benevolence of the Friend, then you are under the .fetter of your self, not under the bond of the Friend

{Rabb al-‘alamin” {Lord of all the Worlds“

God is the Lord of all the worlds. He is the Lord of whatever is in the heavens and the :earth and whatever is between them

(رَّب السمَّوَاتِ وَ الأَرْضِ وَ مَا بَيْنهُمَا)

(The Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them"(۱)"

And

(هُوَ رَب كلّ ِ شىْ ءٍ)

(He is the Lord of all things."(۲)"

:"Hadrat 'Ali ('a) says about the interpretation of "'alamin

من الجمادات و الحيوانات

That is, He is the Lord of the inanimate objects and the animals, the living and non-living things.

Although in the Qur'an sometimes "'alamin" refers to human beings, in most cases "'alam" refers to creatures while "'alamin" points to all creatures. It can be thus understood that He is the Lord of the entire creation and that what some believed during the pre-Islamic period of ignorance {yawm al-jahiliyyah} and among some nations that there is a distinct god for every type or kingdom of creatures is a false idea.

God has determined the course of growth and perfection of all creatures after creating them and the divine nurture is the same course as that of divine guidance.

(Our Lord is He who gave everything its creation and then guided it."(۳)"

It is He who taught the honeybee which plant to suck. It is He

---

۱- Surah Maryam ۱۹:۶۵.

۲- Surah al-An'am ۶:۱۶۴.

۳- Surah Ta Ha ۲۰:۵۰.

who taught the ant how to preserve its winter resources. He has created the human

.body in such a way that it is automatically hematogenous

Yes, such a God is worthy of praise and gratitude. One of the peculiar characteristics of man is that he appreciates beauty, perfection and elegance, and expresses gratitude for favors and goodness. God, the Exalted, is worthy of praise on account of His Beauty and Perfection, and He is worthy of being thanked because of His .goodness and favors

Of course, to be grateful to God is not inconsistent with expressing thanks to people provided that it is the command of God and in the way of God. Although anyone can show his appreciation for others in diverse ways, in reality he is praising the Source .and Fountainhead

Rabb al-'alamin" means that the relationship between God and the creatures is a" .perpetual and close-knit relationship

Rabb al-'alamin" means that there is the possibility of growth and training for all. Not" only the good but the bad also benefit from the divine favors. "To these and to those— (to all We extend."(۱

God says: "We assist all and have provided the ground for all so that each person could attain whatever aim he has." Since the world is the abode of prohibition and .obstacles, it is natural that not everyone can attain his or her goal

.Rabb al-'alamin" means that God is both the Ruler and the Manager of creation"

rabiya" which means "one who" "رَبَی" The word "rabb" is derived from either

---

.Surah al-Isra' ۱۷:۲۰ -۱

bestows growth and training", or from "rabba" which means "owner". God is the Owner of the world as well as its Nourisher and Manager. "All creation and command (belong to Him. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of all the worlds."(۱

According to the traditions, the phrase “All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds”(۲) is the best gratitude for the favors of God. Thus, it is enjoined to praise {hamd} God before any supplication or request is made of Him; otherwise, the supplication is defective.

Not only is it mentioned at the beginning of supplication and adulation but the inhabitants of paradise also repeat the same phrase at the end of a task:

(وَآخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ)

“And their concluding call, ‘All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the all the worlds.”(۳)

“Ar-rahmani’r-rahim” {the All-beneficent, the All-merciful}

Translating these two terms into Persian as “bakhshandeh-ye mehraban” is not a perfect and expressive translation because according to ‘Allamah Shahid Mutahhari, “bakhshandeh-ye mehraban” is the translation of the Arabic words jawad {generous} and ra’uf {kind}, and not rahman and rahim. And in principle, there have been no equivalent Persian terms for both these words.

Although both “رَحْمَن” and “rahman” “رَحيم” rahim have been derived from the root-word “رَحْمَه” rahmah,” “rahman,” which encompasses the expansive beneficence of God, and is general and includes all human beings, however “rahim” is a mercy which will be showered only on those who are good as a reward for their good deeds. Thus, according to Imam

---

۱- Surah al-A‘raf ۷:۵۴.

۲- Surah al-Fatihah ۱:۲.

۳- Surah Yunus ۱۰:۱۰.

as-Sadiq (‘a) God is rahman in relation to all the creatures but He is rahim only to the believers. God has made mercy {rahmah} incumbent upon Himself: “He has made mercy incumbent upon Himself.”(۱) Similarly, the Prophet and the Book of Allah are

:also mercies for all of creation

(وَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَكَ إِلا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَلَمِينَ)

"We did not send you but as a mercy to all the nations."(2)

His nourishment and training are based on mercy and His punishment and requital are like the stick of a teacher which is necessary in training. Forgiveness of sins, acceptance of repentance, concealment of people's faults, and giving respite to compensate for the past are all manifestations of His all-encompassing mercy.

In essence, creation is a manifestation of His mercy and whatever reaches every creature from Him is grace and mercy. Thus, all surahs of the Qur'an (with the exception of Surah at-Tawbah) begin with Bismillahi'r-rahmani'r-rahim {In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful}.

Ar-rahmani'r-rahim alongside rabb al-'alamin means that the divine nourishment is based on grace and mercy. In the same manner, His teaching is also anchored on mercy and compassion: "The All-beneficent has taught the Qur'an."(3) And this is itself a lesson for us human beings that the teacher and trainer must be always benevolent and compassionate.

"Maliki yawmi'd-din" {Master of the Day of Retribution}

God is the Master of the Day of Retribution. He is both the Master {malik} and the Sovereign {malik}. The universe is an estate {milk} under His possession {malikiyyah} as well as a dominion {mulk} under

---

۱- Surah al-An'am ۶:۱۲.
۲- Surah al-Anbiya' ۲۱:۱۰۷.
۳- Surah ar-Rahman ۵۵:۱-۲.

His sovereignty and rule. His possession is comprehensive, encompassing everything.

Even the government is under his possession: “Say, ‘O Allah, Master of all sovereignty!’”(۱) In the same token, man, in relation to the limbs of his body, is the .master as well as sovereign and commander

The mastership of God is real, and not delegated and contractual. God is the Master of both the world and the hereafter. Yet, since man regards himself as the master of things and affairs in this world, he tends to become negligent of the Original Master. On that day when all causes will cease to exist, all relations will be abrogated and all tongues will be sealed, at that point, he will feel and discern the divine sovereignty well; for, he shall be addressed, thus: “To whom does the sovereignty belong today?”(۲) When man would just open his eyes, he will say: “To Allah, the One, the All-(paramount.”(۳

The praying person who recites every day, “God the Master of the Day of Retribution” always remembers the Day of Resurrection and Reckoning. Before doing whatever work he intends to do, he first thinks about the book of accounts on the Day of .Retribution

”The Arabic word “din

:The Arabic word “din” has various meanings

۱. “Din” is the divine law and shari‘ah, as the Holy Qur’an says: “Indeed, with Allah (religion is Islam.”(۴

۲. “Din” is deed and obedience, as the Holy Qur’an states, thus: “{Only} exclusive faith (is worthy of Allah.”(۵

۳. “Din” as account and retribution, as this noble verse proclaims: “Master of

---

۱- Surah Al ‘Imran ۳:۲۶.

۲- Surah al-Ghafir (or al-Mu’min) ۴۰:۱۶.

۳- Surah Ibrahim ۱۴:۴۸; Surah al-Ghafir (or al-Mu’min) ۴۰:۱۶.

4- 3:19 Surah Al 'Imran.

5- 39:3 Surah az-Zumar.

the Day of Retribution."

One of the names of the Day of Resurrection is "yawm ad-din". That is, the day of punishment and reward, just as the Holy Qur'an narrates about those who deny the Day of Resurrection: "They ask, 'When will be the Day of Retribution?'" (1) Or, in describing that day the Qur'an says:

(ثُمَّ مَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ يَوْمَ لا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَالأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ)

"Again, what will show you what the Day of Retribution is? It is a day when no soul will be of any avail to another soul and all command that day will belong to Allah." (2)

"Master of the Day of Retribution" is a warning and a caution—O praying one! Starting today, think of tomorrow; the day when "Neither wealth nor children will avail;" (3) the day when "Your relatives and your children will not avail you;" (4) the day when neither the tongue has the permission to ask an apology nor the mind the opportunity to think; the day when nothing will avail and benefit except the grace {lutf} of God.

The placement of "Master of the Day of Retribution" alongside "the All-beneficent, the All-merciful" shows that fear and hope must go hand in hand and encouragement and punishment are together. As the Holy Qur'an says in another verse,

(نَبِّئْ عِبَادِي أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الأَلِيمُ)

"Inform My servants that I am indeed the All-forgiving, the All-merciful, and that My punishment is a painful punishment." (5)

And in yet another verse,

1- 51:12 Surah adh-Dhariyat.

2- 82:18-19 Surah al-Infitar.

.Surah ash-Shu‘ara’ ۲۶:۸۸ -۳

.Surah al-Mumtahanah ۶۰:۳ -۴

.Surah al-Hijr ۱۵:۴۹-۵۰ -۵

(God is described as: “acceptor of repentance, severe in retribution.”(۱

At any rate, “the All-beneficent, the All-merciful” is a giver of hope while “the Master of the Day of Retribution” elicits fear. The Muslim must be between fear and hope, apprehension and aspiration so as neither to feel proud nor to be hopeless of divine .mercy

Iyyaka na‘bud wa iyyaka nasta‘in” {You {alone} do we worship and to You {alone} do we“ {turn for help

Iyyaka na‘bud” means that “We are servants of You alone and not of others.” This “ sentence has two dimensions: One is the affirmation of servitude to Him and the other is the negation of servitude to other than Him. Yes, the perfect school {maktab} alongside faith in God necessitates denial of the taghut, and those who have faith in God but have accepted the hegemony of the taghuts are “half-Muslims” or perhaps !not Muslims at all

Faith in God minus the denial of the taghut means a captive Muslim! In order to be relieved from the axis of shirk {polytheism}, one must seek refuge in the center of unity and power. Thus, while standing in prayer the person praying does not see .himself alone by thinking of himself alone

Rather, as if representing all monotheists, he is saying: “O God! I alone am not deserving and worthy to have a meritorious worship. So, I have joined the other Muslims and we do worship and adore You together. I am not alone; rather, all of us seek assistance from You. Therefore, prayer in principle must be said in congregation, and individual prayer belongs to the

---

.Surah al-Ghafir (or al-Mu’min) ۴۰:۳ -۱

.next stage

The preceding verses gave us theoretical monotheism {tawhid} and the proper cognition of God, whereas this verse discusses devotional and practical tawhid. That is, we should not only recognize God in His Oneness, but we should also, in practice, worship Him alone and we should be monotheist. Why should you abandon God who is the All-beneficent, All-merciful, Sovereign, and Master, and subject yourself to the ?servitude of others

Be the servant of God alone, and not the servant of the West or the East, not the servant of gold and silver, and not the servant of the taghuts. You do not have even the right to serve and obey the righteous except in cases where God gives you the permission or command. For example, regarding His Prophet, God says: "Whoever obeys the Apostle certainly obeys Allah."(۱) That is, if we obey our father and mother, .it is because God commands us to do so and in doing so, we are actually obeying Him

By the dictate of reason, man must accept servitude to God only because we human beings are in love with perfection and in need of growth and nourishment. God is also the embodiment of all perfections and the Lord of all beings. If we are in need of benevolence and affection, then He is the All-beneficent and the All-merciful, and if we worry about the distant future, then He is the Controller and Master of that day. So, why should we go to others and seek help

---

.Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۸۰ -۱

?from them

Iyyaka na'bud" means that I am with the people, but I have no emotional attachment" to other than You. Neither do I isolate myself from the congregation of Muslims for me to forget Your creatures nor am I be absorbed in the congregation that I would abandon You, the Creator. Rather, I know that the way toward the Creator passes .through the creatures

Iyyaka nasta'in" means that although we make use of the causes and means You" have placed in creation, I know that the effectiveness and efficiency of every cause and means is through Your hand. You are the One giving effect to the cause as well as the One rendering it futile. You bestow effect on something as well as take away its .effect. You will is dominant over all laws and nature is subjected to Your will

Iyyaka na'bud" means that You alone are worthy of worship and that we worship" You not on account of fear (of hell) and covetousness (for paradise), but out of love and affection to You. Which beloved {mahbub} is closer and more compassionate to ?us than You

Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'in" means that it is neither predestination {jabr} nor" Divine Resignation {tafwid}.(۱) As we say, "na'bud" {we worship}, it follows that we have free will and since we say "nasta'in" {we turn for help}, it means that we are .needy and that all affairs are beyond our control

Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'in" means that we perform the prayer in" congregation and that

---

۱- Divine Resignation {tafwid} means leaving man to his own devises and suspending {.the divine will from any effective role. {Trans

.we Muslims are standing in one line, in unison and solidarity as brothers and equals

Iyyaka na'bud" means: O God! I regard You as present and watching over me and so" ,I am saying

Iyyaka {You}" for the servant who regards himself in the presence of God, the" .Exalted, will benefit sooner

From the beginning of Surah al-Fatihah, we have been talking about God in third person, but in this part we are addressing Him in the second person (iyyaka {You}). Initially, we are acquainted with God and little by little we begin to reach toward

Himself. And it is not only once but rather, as the conversation with one's beloved is sweet and pleasant, we do repeat the address, "iyyaka" {You} (twice).

O God! Although worship is incumbent upon us, in worshipping we are also in need of Your help:

(وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِىَ لَوْلا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللّهُ)

"We would have never been guided had not Allah guided us."(1)

Though to Him alone do we turn for help, seeking assistance from other than Him is permissible provided that it is by His leave. For example, man seeks the assistance of his own talents, faculties and mind, this is not repugnant to the principle of tawhid. God Himself thus commands us to cooperation—"تعاوَنوا"—because life without cooperation and assistance is not possible.

Hadrat 'Ali ('a) said to a certain person who was praying, "O God! Do not make me in need of people": "This is not a correct sentence. Instead, you say, 'O

1- Surah al-A'raf ۷:۴۳.

God! Do not make me in need of bad people' because life without cooperation and assistance is impossible."

Anyone who would sincerely say, "Iyyaka na'bud," has no more sense of pride, vanity and egoism, and he is obeisant and subservient to the divine commands. He knows that since God has bestowed so much grace upon him, the best of submissiveness must be shown in His presence.

He would stand like an absolute servant in front of his Absolute Master and humbly say, "I am the servant and You are the Master. I have nobody else except You. But You have many others apart from me. You are needless of my worship. On the contrary, I am absolutely in need of Your grace and generosity, and I have to turn to

".You for help always

{Ihdina's–sirat al–mustaqim" {Guide us on the Straight Path"

:The caravan of creation is constantly moving toward God, the Exalted

(Toward Him is the return"(١"

:and man is also endeavoring and moving

(You are laboring toward your Lord"(٢"

and in every movement, there is only one straight path and all other paths are deviant. Islam has also determined both the path and guide for this movement, specified the destination, and given man the means of wayfaring. And it is us who .have to choose which way to traverse

God has endowed the desire for growth, perfection and the quest for truth in the depth of the soul and the natural disposition of every human being. If they are nurtured in the light of the teachings of the prophets

---

.Surah al-Ma'idah ۵:١٨ -١
.Surah al-Inshiqaq ٨۴:۶ -٢

a), this desire and endeavor will earn the special favor of God: "As for those who are') ({rightly} guided, He enhances their guidance."(١

The Qur'an talks about two types of guidance. One is creational guidance {hidayat-e takwini} such as the guidance endowed the honeybee about how to suck the nectar of flowers and how to make honey. The other type of guidance is religious guidance {hidayat-e tashri'i} which is specific to human beings and it refers to the instructions .(of the divine prophets ('a

?{Which one is the Straight Path {Sirat Al–Mustaqim

The word “sirat” which has been mentioned in the Qur’an more than ۴۰ times means a path that is permanent, luminous and wide. There are numerous paths in the life of :man one of which has to choose

The path of one’s desires; the path of people’s inclinations; the path of the taghuts; the path of our ancestors and the predecessors in terms of ethnic and racial fanaticisms; the path of satanic insinuations; the uncharted paths; and finally, the .path of God and the divine saints

It is natural that the person who believes in God would choose the path of God and the divine saints alone because this path has merits which the other paths do not :possess

- The straight path is the shortest route between two points. So, this is the fastest .way to arrive at the destination

- The divine path is permanent. It is contrary to other paths which change everyday .according to one’s desires or the desires of others

- There is only one way between two

۱– Surah Muhammad ۴۷:۱۷.

.points; there is only straight path. Other paths are different in one way or another

- It is the certain and harmless path. It is contrary to other paths where man is always .under the threat of perdition

- This is the way that leads to the destination, i.e. the pleasure of God, in which there .is no defeat and failure

- (The straight path is the way of God: “Indeed my Lord is on a straight path.”(۱

- The straight path is the very path of the prophets (‘a): “You are indeed one of the

(apostles, on a straight path.”(٢

The straight path is the path of servitude to God: “Worship Me. This is a straight • (path.”(٣

The straight path is the path of trust and reliance on God: “And whoever takes • (recourse in Allah is certainly guided to a straight path.”(۴

Man should turn to God for help in choosing the path as well as in traversing and keeping on the path. It is just like an electric lamp that should continuously receive electricity from the main source in order to keep alight. Thus, not only the common people but also the prophets of God and the infallible Imams (‘a) have to pray to God .to keep them on the straight path

Not only in prayer but rather in all conditions and in every task, whether it is in choosing one’s occupation or friend, in marriage and in studies, man should always pray to God to keep him on the

---

١- Surah Hud ١١:۵۶.

٢- Surah Ya Sin ٣۶:٣-۴.

٣- Surah Ya Sin ٣۶:۶١.

۴- Surah Al ‘Imran ٣:١٠١.

straight path. It is because there are many cases when a certain person has correct .beliefs but he has shortcomings in practice at times even acting to the contrary

:The straight path is the middle path of moderation. Imam ‘Ali (‘a) says

اَلْيِمينُ وَ الشِّمالُ مَضَلَّه و الطَّريقُ الْوُسْطَى هِىَ الجادَّه.

“(Left and right are deviations and the path of felicity is the middle way.”(١

The straight path means to keep aloof from any sort of immoderation {ifrat} and profligacy {tafrit}; neither the denial of truth nor extremism in truth; neither

predestination {jabr} nor Divine Resignation {tafwid}; neither individualism nor collectivism; neither mere theory nor mere practice; neither worldliness nor otherworldliness; neither negligence of the Truth (God) {haqq} nor disregard for the people {khalq}; neither intellectualism nor emotionalism; neither forbiddance of good deeds nor plunging into carnal desires; neither stinginess nor extravagance; neither covetousness nor flattery; neither fear nor impetuosity; etc.

As a matter of fact, we have to always adopt the middle path of moderation in belief and thought as well as in behavior and action.

In moving along the straight path, we have to always seek assistance from God because this path is narrower than a hair and sharper than a sword, and every moment, there is the danger of falling down. The one who will pass by the straight path on the Day of Resurrection is he who did not deviate from the straight path of God in the world whether in the form of intellectual deviations or practical and

---

۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۷, p. ۳.

moral deviations.

One believes in predestination and attributes to God all actions, as if man has no role in charting his own destiny as if he is without control and will. And the other one regards himself as the sole actor of all his deeds, considering the hand of God as tied.

One treats the heavenly leaders as common people while the other one elevates them to the status of divinity, considering al-Masih (the Christ) ('a) as the son of God, nay God Himself!

One maintains that ziyarah {paying homage} and tawassul[(۱)] are acts of polytheism {shirk} while the other resorts to even a tree or a wall! Due to misplaced jealousy, one does not allow his wife to go out of the house while the other one, out of dastardliness, sends his wife to the alley and market without having proper Islamic

.{modest dress {hijab

:All of the above are deviations from the course of the straight path. God says

(قُلْ إِنَّنِی هَدَانِی رَبِّی إِلَی صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِیم دِینًا قِیَمًا)

(Say, ‘Indeed my Lord has guided me to a straight path, the upright religion.”(۲“

:Elsewhere He states

(جَعَلْنَکُمْ أُمَّهً وَسطاً لِّتَکونُوا شهَدَاءَ عَلی النَّاسِ)

(Thus We have made you a middle nation that you may be witness to the people.”(۳“

It has been recorded in the traditions that the infallible Imams (‘a) used to say: “We are the straight path.” That is, the actual and practical straight path, and the model and paradigm on how to traverse this path are the heavenly

---

Tawassul: literally, to resort to intermediaries. Technically, it refers to the practice -۱ of petition prayer addressed to God through a holy personage such as a prophet {.{nabi} or a saint {wali}. {Trans

.Surah al-An‘am ۶:۱۶۱ -۲

.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۱۴۳ -۳

.leaders

In their instructions regarding all aspects of life such as work, entertainment, studies, criticism, giving of charity, and expressions of interest, love, anger, and harmony, they have always admonished us to exercise moderation and equilibrium. These instructions have been recorded in the noble Usul al-Kafi under the heading, “Al-.{Iqtisad fi’l-‘Ibadat” {Moderation in Acts of Worship

At this point, we shall quote some Qur’anic verses and Prophetic traditions in which :moderation has been emphasized while going to extremes has been prohibited

- "Eat and drink, but do not waste."(1)
- "Do not keep your hand chained to your neck, nor open it all together."(2)
- "Those who, when spending, are neither wasteful nor tightfisted, and moderation lies between these {extremes}."(3)
- "Be neither loud in your prayer, nor murmur it, but follow a middle course between these."(4)
- "And those who are with him are hard against the faithless and merciful among themselves."(5)
- "And maintain the prayer and give the zakah."(6) That is, keep your relationship with both the Creator {khaliq} by praying to Him and with the creatures (people) {makhluq} by giving zakat.
- "And those who have faith and do righteous deeds…"(7) That is, both faith and conviction of the heart, and righteous deeds and behavior are required.
- Although the Qur'an says, "And do good to the parents,"(8) in another place it states on the contrary: "(But if they urge you to ascribe to Me as partner that of which you have no knowledge,) then do not obey them"(9)
- "Be witnesses for the sake

۱- Surah al-A'raf ۷:۳۱.

۲- Surah al-Isra' ۱۷:۲۹.

۳- Surah al-Furqan ۲۵:۶۷.

۴- Surah al-Isra' ۱۷:۱۱۰.

۵- Surah al-Fath ۴۸:۲۹.

۶- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۴۳.

۷- Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۸۲.

.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۸۳ -۸
.Surah al-'Ankabut ۲۹:۸ -۹

of Allah, even if it should be against yourselves"(۱) and "And ill feeling for a people should never lead you to be unfair."(۲)

- On the night of 'Ashura' Imam al-Husayn ('a) was praying intimately to God as well as sharpening his sword!

- The pilgrims of the House of God are praying on the Day of 'Arafah and the night preceding the Feast of Sacrifice {'id al-qurban}, but on the day of the feast they have to go to the slaughterhouse and familiarize themselves with blood!

- And finally, Islam is not one-dimensional and has not focused on only one aspect while neglecting others. Rather, it has paid attention to all the dimensions of life in a balanced manner.

"Sirat alladhina an'amta 'alayhim ghayri'l-maghdubi 'alayhim wa lad-dallin"

"Sirat alladhina an'amta 'alayhim ghayri'l-maghdubi 'alayhim wa lad-dallin" {The path of those whom You have blessed—such as have not incurred Your wrath, nor are astray}

After asking for guidance along the straight path, the one praying beseeches God to keep him along that path which has been the path of those who have earned divine grace. In Surah an-Nisa', verse ۶۹ and Surah Maryam, verse ۵۸, the Qur'an describes this group. Here, we shall cite below the former reference:

(وَ مَنْ يُطِعِ اللّهَ وَ الرَّسُولَ فَأُولئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللهُ عَلَيهِم مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَ الصِّدِّيقِينَ وَ الشُّهَداءِ وَ الصَّالِحِينَ وَ حَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا)

"Whoever obeys Allah and the Apostle—they are with those whom Allah has blessed, including the prophets and the truthful, the martyrs and the righteous."(۳)

The person praying is invoking God to include him in the

.Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۱۳۵ -۱

.Surah al-Ma'idah ۵:۸ -۲

.Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۶۹ -۳

ranks of the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs and the righteous. Aspiring for this path of the upright and pure ones protects from the peril of deviation and aberration, .and their memory and reminiscence are always alive in the heart of the one praying

?Who are those who are astray and have incurred the divine wrath

In the Qur'an, individuals such as the Pharaoh, Qarun (Korah) and Abu Lahab, as well as communities such as the peoples of 'Ad and Thamud and the Children of Israel have been described as those who have incurred the divine wrath. In every prayer, we ask God for us not to be like these individuals and communities that have incurred .divine anger and wrath in belief, morality and deeds

The Children of Israel whose account and civilization have been most frequently mentioned in the Qur'an, they were once superior to all the people of their time. Concerning them, God says: "I gave you an advantage over the nations."(۱) But in spite of this advantage and superiority, they incurred the anger and wrath of God because of their reprehensible thoughts and actions. In this regard, the Qur'an states: "And they earned Allah's wrath"(۲) That is, this change in their fate was caused by the .change in their behavior

The Jewish scholars distorted the heavenly commandments of the Tawrah (Torah): (۳) "They pervert words (from their meanings)."(۴) The traders and the wealthy among them engaged in usury {riba'} and profiteering: "And for their taking usury..."(۵) And in reply to the call for jihad and struggle, the common people

.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۴۷ -۱

.Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۶۱ -۲

Tawrah (Torah): the scripture revealed to Prophet Musa (Moses) ('a) in its original -۳ {.form. {Trans

.Surah al-Ma'idah ۵:۱۳ -۴

.Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۱۶۱ -۵

refused to go to the battlefront out of self-preservation and fear, thus saying to Musa :(('a

(فَاذْهَبْ أَنتَ وَرَبُّکَ فَقَاتِلا إِنَّا هَاهُنَا قَاعِدُونَ)

(Go ahead, you and your Lord, and fight! We will be sitting right here."(۱"

The same intellectual and practical deviations made God removed them from the .pinnacle of glory to the abyss of abjectness and ignominy

So, in every prayer, we have to implore God that we be not of the people who distorted the Book of Allah, the people who took usury, and the people who fled from war and jihad; similarly, that we should not be among the misguided ones; those who, like lost persons, are subject to abjectness and ignominy, and every moment, without having a prior aim, they wander about; they live as opportunists and have no will and .power of their own

Those who are astray—"dallin"—are not like the blessed ones—"an'amta 'alayhim"—who have been included in the ranks of the prophets and the righteous, and are not like those who have incurred the divine wrath—"al-maghdubi 'alayhim"—who are waging war against the religion of God. Instead, they are indifferent, indolent and comfort-seeking individuals who, like animals, are only thinking of the stomach and .the flesh, without caring for truth and falsehood

For them, it makes no difference whether the prophets or the taghuts are ruling. What is important for them is that they live in material comfort and ease; anyone who likes may rule. This is the group of the misguided ones because they

.Surah al-Ma'idah ۵:۲۴ -۱

.have not chosen a specific way for themselves

This verse, "Sirat alladhina an'amta 'alayhim ghayri'l-maghdubi 'alayhim wa lad-dallin," is the perfect showcase of tawalla {befriending the truthful ones} and tabarra .{{avoiding the people of falsehood

At the end of Surah al-Fatihah, the person praying expresses his love, fondness and tawalla for the prophets, the martyrs and the righteous, as well as his disavowal {bara'ah} and renunciation {tabarra} of the misguided and those who have earned the divine wrath. This expression of aversion toward the deviant and those who have incurred the anger of God in every prayer makes the Islamic society firm and :resistant to the acceptance of their rule. The Qur'an thus exhorts

(لا تَتَوَلَّوْا قَوْماً غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ)

(Do not befriend a people at whom Allah is wrathful."(۱"

Surah al-Ikhlas

The importance of Surah al-Ikhlas

In the prayer, after Surah al-Fatihah, one of the surahs of the Qur'an must be recited. The person praying might choose any surah; of course, with the exception of the four .surahs in which prostration is obligatory

Among the surahs recited in prayer, Surah al-Ikhlas (or at-Tawhid) is preferable and in the traditions it is thus enjoined: "You have to read this surah in at least one of the (rak'ahs of prayer everyday so as to be among those who are praying."(۲

In terms of importance, this surah is equal to one third of the Qur'an, nay one third of the Tawrah, Injil(۳) and Zabur.(۴) If this surah is also recited after the prayer as a

.Surah al-Mumtahanah ۶۰:۱۳ -۱

The traditions regarding the merits and importance of this surah have been - ۲ recorded in Tafsir Burhan. In this volume, we shall only quote some of these .traditions

{.Injil: the scripture revealed to Prophet ‘Isa (Jesus) (‘a) in its original form. {Trans -۳

Zabur: the scripture revealed to Prophet Dawud (David) (‘a) in its original form. - ۴ {.{Trans

prayer supplement, God shall give the person the goodness of this world and the .hereafter

This surah is short, yet its content is very sublime. As Imam as-Sajjad (‘a) said, “Since He knew that meticulous and insightful individuals shall emerge in the future, God .revealed this surah as well as the initial verses of Surah al-Hadid

Recital of this surah is enjoined not only in prayer. In fact, frequent recitation of it .removes the evil of tyrants and ensures one’s house from mishaps and perils

Sa‘d ibn Mu‘adh, one of the companions and commanders of the army of the Messenger of Allah (S), was buried in the cemetery of Baqi‘ in Medina. The Prophet (S) participated in the burial rites for him barefooted and saying: “Ninety thousand angels have come to participate in the burial of Sa‘d.” The Prophet (S) asked Jibra’il (Archangel Gabriel) (‘a): “What is the reason behind your coming down as well as that of all these angels for the burial of Sa‘d ibn Mu‘adh?” Jibra’il (‘a) replied: “In whatever state—standing, sitting, riding, or walking—he used to recite the surah, “Say, ‘He is ”.’Allah, the One

Concerning the circumstances surrounding the revelation of this surah, we read that the Jews, Christians and the idol-worshippers asked the Prophet (S) about God: “Describe your God to us.” In reply to them, the Prophet (S) recited this surah. This .surah serves as the “identity card” of God

”Qul huwa’llahu ahad“

Tawhid {monotheism} is the most fundamental principle of all heavenly religions and

the

p: ۱۱۳

prophets ('a) have come to eliminate the effects of polytheism, disbelief and idol-worship and to invite mankind toward God.

Tawhid is the spirit and kernel of the teachings of the prophets ('a). Not only beliefs but also laws and morality revolve around the axis of tawhid.

Tawhid is the frontier between faith {iman} and disbelief {kufr}, and entering the fortress of faith without acknowledgment of tawhid is not possible: "Say, 'La ilaha illa'llah {There is no god but Allah}' to attain success"(۱) and "La ilaha illa'llah is My fortress; so, whoever enters My fortress is safe from My wrath."(۲)

This surah consists of the purest monotheist beliefs; hence, this surah is called Surah al-Ikhlas {Chapter: Purity}. This surah refutes the Christian belief in the Trinity, the polytheism of the Jews as well as the belief of the Arabs during the pre-Islamic period of ignorance who regarded the angels as the daughters of God.

Tawhid means the purification of mind and action from any form of polytheism and associating partners with God; neither theoretical polytheism nor practical ostentation. Instead, both the motive and the action itself must be only for the sake of God.

That is, He is One and has no substitute; He has neither similitude nor equal; He has neither limbs nor parts.

That is, He is the Worshipped Being {ma'bud} who is unique in everything. Thus, His Essence is beyond the comprehension and understanding of man.

The reason behind His Oneness is that if there were also another "God", this "God" would also

p: ۱۱۴

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۱, p. ۲۰۲ -۱

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۳, p. ۱۳ -۲

!"have been supposed to send prophets to mankind to recognize and obey "Him

The reason behind His Oneness is that at the time of danger, all human beings focus only on the One Being and their hearts testify to the fact that only One Being gives .hopes to man amid all difficulties

The reason behind His Oneness is the harmony between the heaven and the earth, the universe and man, and the precise and orderly relations among all creatures. If you would ask three painters to draw a single rooster, for example, asking one of them to draw its head, the second one to draw its body, and the third one to draw its tail or feet, there would be no harmony among the three drawings when you place them together; one might be big while the other one might be small; one may have a .dark color while the other one may have a light color

Yes, the harmony existing between the sun, moon, earth, water, wind, soil, mountain, desert, sea, and others, on one hand, and the needs of man, on the other, signifies .that there is only One Creator

The human being inhales oxygen and exhales carbon dioxide. On the contrary, a plant absorbs carbon dioxide and releases oxygen. In this way, the needs of man and other livings creatures are met, and this harmony is the secret behind the life of men and .plants

,The needs of an infant are met through the love and affection of its parents

and the weariness of the day is removed through sleep at night. The water of the eye (tears) has been created salty and the water of the mouth (saliva) fresh. In this way, the salty water cleanses the eyes while the fresh water prepares the food for the .processes of chewing and digestion

Instead of dying, the infant is taught to suck and even before it is born, its milk has been made available in the breasts of the mother. The food of some birds is located along the teeth of whales in the sea. And everyday, animals are satisfactorily provided .with food

During the Battle of Jamal, a Bedouin Arab asked Hadrat 'Ali ('a) about the meaning of tawhid. The soldiers complained to him, saying that it was not the time for such questions. Nevertheless, the Imam ('a) explained to him the meaning and interpretation of tawhid, and then said: "It is for this very meaning (of tawhid) that we (are now fighting."(١

Yes, the struggle of the followers of truth throughout history has been for the sake of .hoisting the banner of tawhid

{Allahu's-samad" {Allah is the All-embracing"

.Samad" means impenetrable, indestructible and unchangeable"

He is samad. So, He is not material or corporeal because all corporeal things experience change and destruction with the passage of time. Thus, He has no body that can be seen by the eyes or such an attractive force that, though unseen, has .corporeality

He is samad, the Impenetrable Force whose will pervades and penetrates all

---

.Tafsir Nur ath-Thaqalayn, vol. ۵, p. ٧٠٩ -١

.things

He is samad, the Indestructible, the Honorable from whom all honors come and whatever honor and power anyone has emanates from Him. He is not in need of .anybody or anything but everything is in need of Him

He is samad, the Absolute Perfect Being, nay the Absolute All-perfect Being who

possesses all excellences at the apex of their perfection. In order to attain perfection, all beings are in need of His grace, but He is and will not be in need of any being. His Command is above all other commands and His Will is above all other wills. He is in .need of neither sleep nor assistance and partners in doing His work

.He is samad, and in a nutshell, He is the Needless God who is always needed by all

{Lam yalid wa lam yulad" {He neither begat nor was begotten"

He is the Creator of all beings and is not the one who gave birth to them. His work is not reproduction such as "reproducing Himself". It is instead bringing something into .being from non-being or nothing

In the case of the mother who gives birth to a child, the infant belongs to her genus and is like her, i.e. a human. But with respect to God, it is impossible for an equal and similar being to be begotten by Him or for Him to have been begotten: "Nothing is like (Him."(۱

This sentence is against the belief of the Christians who believe in 'Isa ('a) as the son of God, and treat

---

.Surah ash-Shura ۴۲:۱۱ -۱

him like God. In the same vein, this verse negates the belief of the polytheists who imagined that the angels were the daughters of God by saying: "God has never "!begotten a child, whether a girl or a boy

Nothing is to be begotten unless that the one who begot is preeminent and superior to the begotten one, not to mention the fact that the one who begot existed prior to the !begotten one

His existence is not like the sprouting of the fruit from the flower; the tree from the seed; the water from the cloud; the fire from the wood. It is not like the emergence of

words from the mouth; or the script from the pen. It is not like the emission of scent from the flower, or taste from food. It is not like the flashing of an idea from the mind, .or intuition from the heart

It is not like the appearance of heat from fire or cold from snow. He exists but is similar to nothing and no one. He is neither in anything nor is anything in Him. His relationship with things is not like that of a parent to his child. It is rather the .{relationship of the Creator {khaliq} with the creature {makhluq

{Wa lam yakun lahu kufuwan ahad” {Nor has He any equal“

He has no equal in being, perfection and action. He is One and no one is similar to Him. He is the One and Only and He has neither spouse nor offspring! He has no equal to be His

.assistant and partner

How could man dare to regard His creature as His partner and commit this grievous ?inequity against Him

)Polytheism is indeed a great injustice.”(١“

O praying one! Do not consider others as His partners and associates in the favors that He bestows upon you, nor attribute to other than Him the things you do. Why do you think of attracting the attention of those who are like you—weak and needy? Try .to win the favor of God instead who has no equal, weakness and need

:At the end of the surah, we shall take a cursory glance at its sublime content

(قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَد)

That is, He is One in Essence as well as in Attributes. So, He is also One in worthiness .{to be the Worshipped Being {ma‘bud

(اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ)

That is, He is free from want and all things are in need of Him, and He is Alone in being .free from want

(لَمْ يَلِدْ)

.That is, He does not reproduce an equal for Him to have a peer and a match

(وَ لَمْ يُولَدْ)

That is, He is the First and the Last. He is not created to have emerged from .something

(وَ لَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كفُواً أَحَدُ)

.That is, He has neither equal nor spouse; neither peer nor partner

This surah negates all layers of polytheism, superstitions, delusions, and deviant beliefs from the Sacred Essence of God, while presenting to us pure and pristine .tawhid

According to the traditions, the verses of this surah are

۱- Surah Luqman ۳۱:۱۳.

:the interpretation of each other.(۱) They describe God in a step-by-step process

First step: Say, "He is my God. He is beyond the comprehension of the human mind ".and intellect, and He is hidden and absent from any vision

At this stage, all the attention is focused on the Essence of God and not on His Attributes. The Essence alone is enough for His being the Beloved {mahbub} and the :Worshipped Being {ma'bud}. Hadrat 'Ali ('a) says

وَ كَمالُ الإِخْلاصِ نَفْىُ الصِّفاتِ عَنْه.

That is, perfect sincerity is that you worship Him without taking into account His Attributes.(۲) That is, you worship God for the sake of Himself and not on account of .the favors that have been given to you

".Second step: "He is Allah, the Worshipped Being who possesses all perfection

In this stage, the Essence and Attributes are considered together. "Allah" is the Essence that possesses all the good Attributes, and thus He is worthy of worship and ,devotion. As the Qur'an states

(وَ للَّهِ الأَسمَاءُ الحُسنى فَادْعُوهُ بهَا)

(To Allah belong the Best Names, so supplicate Him by them."(۳"

Knowing God through the Attributes is the second step in which "Allah" is the .comprehensive word for all those Attributes

Considering God by way of the Attributes is a means that is manifested in the supplications, especially in the Du'a' Jawshar Kabir where we address God through a .thousand Attributes

".Third step: "He is One and Unique in Oneness

In this stage, tawhid is discussed—tawhid in Essence and Attributes. His Essence is One and His

---

.Tafsir Nur ath-Thaqalayn, vol. ۵, p. ۷۱۴ -۱
."Najh al-Balaghah, "Khutbah at-Tawhid -۲
.Surah al-A'raf ۷:۱۸۰ -۳

Attributes are Unique and Unparalleled. The existence of His Essence and His Attributes are one and the same; not that His Attributes are a separate existence .added to His Essence

He is One who has no second or third. The numerical “one” {wahid} is different from oneness as a qualitative concept {ahad}. The Qur’an says: “God is ahad and not ”.wahid

He is “One” (ontologically) and not “one” (numerically) which may have a second or a .third of its kind

”.Fourth step: “God is free from want

In this stage, the freedom from want which is the pivot of the Divine Essence and Attributes is an important description of God. In addition, it is not just in the form of a predicate, stating: “Allahu samad”. It is rather in the form of a fixed description of ”.“Allah” and because of this, the word “Allah” is hereby repeated: “Allahu samad

He is One but not in need. Other than Him are many, but all the needs and attention of !all those who are needy are geared toward that Independent One

:Fifth step

(لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ)

He is not in need .”الصَّمَد“ This stage, according to the traditions, is the interpretation of of begetting a child. Neither is He in need of a father and a mother to beget Him, nor .of a spouse, associate and partner to assist Him in His work

If He were ever born, then He would not be the First, and if He ever gave

p: ١٢١

birth, then He would not be eternal because He would be prone to diminish and dwindle. If He ever had an equal and a peer, then He would not be unrivalled. He is .free and exempt from all these things

(سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشرِكُونَ)

(Clear is Allah of any partners that they may ascribe {to Him}!”(١“

{Bowing Down {ruku‘} and Prostration {sujud

{‘Bowing down {ruku

Bowing down {ruku‘} is an essential pillar of prayer. Performing it in an excessive or .inadequate manner, whether intentional or unintentional, renders the prayer invalid

The word “rak‘ah” {circle} which is used in counting the cycles of prayer is derived .”‘from the word “ruku

The tribe of Thaqif requested that the Prophet (S) excuse them from performing ruku‘ and prostration {sujud} in prayer, saying: “Bending down for us is a shame.” This :verse was revealed

(وَ إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ ارْكَعُوا لا يَرْكَعُونَ)

(When they are told, ‘Bow down,’ they do not bow down!”(۲“

Others bow and show reverence in front of human beings like themselves, but you .have to bow down and show reverence solely to your Creator

When the verse, “So celebrate the Name of your Lord, the All-supreme,”(۳) was revealed, the Prophet (S) ordered: “Show reverence to God while you are in ruku‘ and :{recite this dhikr {remembrance or glorification

سُبْحانَ رَبِّیَ الْعَظِيمِ وَ بِحَمدِهِ

.Subhana rabbiya’l-‘azim wa bihamdih

(Glory be to my Lord, the Great, and praise belongs to Him.”(۴“

We read in the traditions: “Ruku‘ is the sign of courtesy {adab} while the sujud is the symbol of nearness {qurb} to

---

.Surah at-Tur ۵۲:۴۳ -۱

.Surah al-Mursalat ۷۷:۴۸. See Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۵, p. ۱۰۰ -۲

.Surah al-Waqi‘ah ۵۶:۷۴ -۳

.Jami‘ al-Ahadith, vol. ۲, p. ۹۲۲ -۴

God. Once you do not perform the gesture of courtesy properly, you cannot be ready (for the stage of nearness."(۱

Ruku‘ is the means of repentance {tawbah}, penitence and asking forgiveness in the :presence of God

(فَاستَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ وَ خَرَّ رَاكِعاً وَ أَنَاب)

Whereat he (David) pleaded with his Lord for forgiveness, and fell down bowing and" (repented."(۲

‘The effects of ruku

Imam al-Baqir (‘a) says: "Anyone who perfectly performs his ruku‘ perfectly will be (safe from the horror of the grave."(۳

The more we bow down in humility to God, the more we shall have the power to confront the Satan and satanic ones. Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) says: "Long ruku‘ and sujud makes Iblis angry, saying, ‘Woe to me! With such quality of servitude, the people will (no longer obey me."(۴

God says to the angels: "See my servants, how they express reverence to Me and they kneel down in front of Me. I shall also exalt them and give them honor and (glory."(۵

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) says: "A long ruku‘ and sujud have effects on the longevity of (life."(۶

‘The etiquette of performing ruku

We read in the traditions that during ruku‘ the blessed back of the Messenger of Allah (S) would be so bent and so straight that if a drop of water was poured on his back, it

(would remain in the center of his back and not fall to either side."(7)

It is thus enjoined: "During ruku' stretch your neck as if to say: 'I have accepted the faith even if I am beheaded in His way."(8)

Among

1- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 85, p. 108.

2- Surah Sad 38:24.

3- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. 4, p. 928.

4- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. 4, p. 928.

5- Jami' al-Ahadith, vol. 5, p. 203.

6- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. 4, p. 928.

7- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. 4, p. 942.

8- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. 4, p. 942.

the other etiquettes of performing ruku' is that men have to position their elbows outwardly like the wings of a bird and not to attach them to their flanks. We have to place the palms of our hands on our knees and spread our fingers. The feet must be aligned, neither one of them should be placed forward nor backward. Between the feet there must be the distance of about one hand span.

During ruku' one must look between the feet and after the recital of the dhikr for ruku', while still in the position of ruku' one must invoke blessings {salawah} upon Muhammad and his progeny ('a). Of course, repetition of the dhikr for ruku' at least thrice has been recommended and is preferred.(1)

The ruku' of the saints of God

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "Hadrat 'Ali ('a) would make his ruku' so long that his legs would perspire."(2)

Imam 'Ali ('a) himself thus says in the first sermon of Nahj al-Balaghah: "God has

".{angels who are always in the state of ruku' and will never rise up {qiyam

Of course, tiredness and hunger are not applicable to the angels. So, those who are gnostics and lovers of God and who perform such long ruku' persuade the angels to praise God. This is the state of the saints of God. Yet, what about us? The Prophet (S) was once sitting in the mosque when a certain man entered and stood in prayer, but his ruku' and sujud were defective and done very quickly. The Prophet (S) said: "He is

---

.All these etiquettes are recorded in Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, pp. ۹۲۰-۹۴۳ -۱
.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۵, p. ۱۱۰ -۲

like a crow that would peck and go. If he departs from this world with such a state of (prayer, he will not have died under my religion."(۱

The history of sujud

After creating Adam (Adam) ('a), God ordered the angels to prostrate before him. All of them prostrated except Iblis.(۲) On account of this defiance, God expelled him from .His Presence

The Qur'an mentions this episode repeatedly and we know that repetitions in the Qur'an are not without wisdom. It is as if it wants to say: "O man before whom all the angels prostrated! Why do you not prostrate before God, the Creator? O man! Iblis was expelled for refusing to prostrate before you. Once you refuse to prostrate ?before God, what can you expect

Iblis did not prostrate before you. He was saying: 'I am superior to man.' Can you" afford to say: 'I am superior to God'? You—who were once non-existent and once you came into the world, weakness and impotence enveloped your entire being, and in the end you shall also humbly depart from this world—how could you dare to be proud ?in front of the Creator of the universe

At any rate, the first commandment of God after the creation of man was the

.command of prostration

The importance of sujud

- .Sujud is the best position of man in the presence of God

- Sujud is the best way to attain nearness to God: "But prostrate and draw near {to Allah}!"(3)

- A sign of the loyal Companions of the Prophet (S) was that the effect of

---

١- .Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, p. ٩٢٢

٢- Of course, sujud is solely for God and man was merely assumed the qiblah of the angels.

٣- .Surah al-'Alaq ٩۶:١٩

prostration could be seen on their foreheads: "Their mark is {visible} on their faces, from the effect of prostration."(1)

- Sujud makes man harmonious and concordant with all of creation. This is because all creatures in heaven and on earth—from the stars to the plants—prostrate and are humble before God: "To Allah prostrates whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth,"(2) and "And the herb and the tree prostrate {to Allah}."(3)

- Sujud means harmony with the angels of God. Hadrat 'Ali ('a) says: "There is no layer of the heavens without having therein a group of angels in the state of sujud."(4)

- Sujud is the highest degree of obedience and servitude because man places on the earth the loftiest part of his body, i.e. his forehead, and expresses humility and impotence in the presence of the Omnipotent Authority.

- Sujud is the most sublime station for the noblest men and women of the world. God commanded His Prophet (S) to prostrate, and that was not only during daytime but also during the night: "And worship Him for a watch of the night and glorify Him the

night long."(۵) And in addressing Hadrat Maryam (Saint Mary)—that pure and devoted woman—He says: "O Mary, be obedient to your Lord, and prostrate."(۶)

• Sujud comes after the ruku'. It is a more perfect and higher stage than ruku', and brings the person praying to the peak of humility. As such, ruku' and sujud are usually mentioned together in the Qur'an. For example,

---

۱- Surah al-Fath ۴۸:۲۹.

۲- Surah an-Nahl ۱۶:۴۹.

۳- Surah ar-Rahman ۵۵:۶.

۴- Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon ۹۱.

۵- Surah al-Insan ۷۶:۲۶.

۶- Surah Al 'Imran ۳:۴۳.

"O you who have faith! Bow down and prostrate yourselves,"(۱) and "You see them bowing and prostrating {in worship}."(۲)

• Sujud is the symbol of faith in the divine signs: "Only those believe in Our signs who, when they are reminded of them, fall down in prostration."(۳)

• Nightly prostration is one of the signs of the righteous servants of God: "The servants of the All-beneficent are... those who spend the night with their Lord, prostrating and standing {in worship}."(۴)

• Sujud is the adornment of prayer. So, perform it properly. Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "Whenever you perform prayer, perform the ruku' and sujud well as God will give seventy times the reward or even more."(۵)

• Sujud is the source of pride of God to the angels, and thus, it entails His favor such that in every sujud, one of man's sins is forgiven and a great reward is recorded for him.(۶) Hadrat 'Ali ('a) said: "If man only knew what mercy envelopes him at the time of sujud, he would never raise up his head from that state."(۷)

• Sujud extinguishes the spirit of egoism and pride, and delivers man from vanity.(8)

• The Prophet (S) used to say: "On the Day of Resurrection, I will identify my ummah by the mark of prostration that they have on their foreheads."(9) That portion of the earth on which prostration was made will testify to the devotion of man on the Day of Resurrection(10) and even in the world, a radiant point connect it to the

---

۱- Surah al-Hajj ۲۲:۷۷.

۲- Surah al-Fath ۴۸:۲۹.

۳- Surah as-Sajdah ۳۲:۱۵.

۴- Surah al-Furqan ۲۵:۶۳-۶۴.

۵- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۵, p. ۱۳۹.

۶- Jami' al-Ahadith, vol. ۵, p. ۴۶۶.

۷- Jami' al-Ahadith, vol. ۵, p. ۴۸۲.

۸- Jami' al-Ahadith, vol. ۵, p. ۴۵۳.

۹- Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, vol. ۴, p. ۱۸۹.

۱۰- Jami' al-Ahadith, vol. ۵, p. ۱۸۹.

heavens.(1)

• As in the case of ruku', long prostrations result in the permanence of favors and longevity.(2)

• Sujud is so important that God commands a great Prophet (S) such as Ibrahim (Abraham) ('a), to cleanse Masjid al-Haram for those who perform the circumambulation {tawaf} of the Ka'bah, ruku' and sujud.(3)

The wisdom behind sujud

The Commander of the Faithful 'Ali ('a) was asked concerning the wisdom behind sujud. The Imam ('a) said: "The first sujud means that I was dust in the beginning, and as I raise my head from sujud, it means that I came to the world from the dust. The second sujud means that I will again return to the soil, and as I raise my head from

sujud, it means that on the Day of Resurrection I will rise up from the grave and be summoned."(4)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "Since sujud is for God, it must therefore not be done on anything that is eaten or worn which draws the attention of materialists. Sujud must remind man of God, not the stomach, clothing and material things."(5)

We read in the hadith that the reason behind the prostration for forgetfulness {sujud sahwi} for unintentional excess and deficiencies (in the number of any essential pillar of the prayer) or misplaced utterance, standing and sitting is that Iblis distracted your attention and created disorder in your prayer.

Therefore, after prayer you perform two prostrations so as to rub his nose in the ground and to inform him that every time he

---

۱- Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ۴, p. ۴۸۵.
۲- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, p. ۹۲۸.
۳ - Surah al-Baqarah ۲:۱۲۵: "We charged Abraham and Ishmael {with its upkeep, saying}, 'Purify My House for those who go around it, for those who make it a retreat and for those who bow and prostrate."
۴- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۵, p. ۱۳۹.
۵- Al-Faqih, vol. ۱, p. ۲۸۲.

creates disorder, you will again perform prostration before God.(1)

Hadrat 'Ali ('a) said: "The external appearance {zahir} of the sujud is the placing of the forehead on the ground with sincerity and humility, but its esoteric essence {batin} is the detachment of the heart from all perishable things, attachment of the heart to the eternal abode, and relief from pride, fanaticism and all worldly attachments.(2)

The etiquette of performing sujud

We shall point out some of the rules of etiquette of performing sujud as recorded in

(the traditions:(3)

After ruku' in preparation for the performance of sujud, the hands must be placed first on the ground before the knees.

During the sujud the hands must be placed parallel to the ears. For men, the elbows must not be placed on the ground and must remain open on both sides like wings. Not only the forehead but also the nose must be placed on the ground. In between the two prostrations, the person praying must place his left foot under the right foot in such a manner that the weight of his body is on the left side because the left is the symbol of falsehood while the right is the symbol of truth.

During sujud the person praying, apart from the obligatory recital, has to send salawah, supplicate and weep out of fear of God. While rising from sujud, he has to recite takbir and during the recital of takbir, he has to raise both his hands.

The soil of Karbala'

Although sujud on any ground, nay on any clean stone and wood,

---

۱- Al-Wafi, vol. ۸, p. ۹۹۲.
۲- Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. ۴, p. ۴۸۴.
۳- These traditions have been recorded in Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, pp. ۹۵۰-۹۸۰.

is permissible and correct, the soil {turbah} of Imam al-Husayn has great merits. It is said that Imam as-Sadiq ('a) would not prostrate on anything but the soil of Karbala'.

Sujud on the soil of Karbala' tears away seven types of veils {hijabs} (that separate man from the Source of Light). It uplifts the prayer and makes it accepted. It also brings the person praying out of the abyss of material things, and acquaints him with jihad, blood and martyrdom.

Sujud on the soil of al-Husayn ('a) means prayer accompanied by divine guardianship

.{{wilayah

.Sujud on the soil of al-Husayn (‘a) means prayer accompanied by martyrdom

Sujud on the soil of al-Husayn (‘a) means commemorating the memory of the martyrs of Karbala’ who offered their blood for the sake of prayer and in the way of prayer.

Sujud on the soil of al-Husayn (‘a) means that every day is ‘Ashura’ and everyplace is Karbala’.

Sujud on the soil of al-Husayn (‘a) means that in the struggle against falsehood, one should offer his head and soul, but not subject himself to humiliation.

.Yes, the shrine of al-Husayn (‘a) is one of the gardens of heaven and one of its gate

Supplication under the dome of al-Husayn (‘a) is accepted and prayer in that place is beloved and accepted.

If the beads of a rosary {tasbih} made from the soil of Karbala’ are rotated in the hands, there shall be the reward of reciting “subhan Allah” {glory be to Allah} for the owner even if he

p: ١٣٠

is silent. If he does dhikr {the remembrance of God} and uses the rosary, there shall be ٧٠ times the reward for each dhikr.

The importance of Karbala’ as mentioned in the traditions is not concealed so as for it to encompass so far as four miles away from the shrine of Imam al-Husayn (‘a).(١)

{Prostration of thanks {sujud shukr

Prostration is not exclusive to prayer. In fact, it is also discussed in other areas and it is even obligatory sometimes such as after the recital of one of the verses for which prostration is obligatory.

One of the ways of expressing gratitude is the prostration of thanks {sujud shukr}

.which is highly recommended

Sujud shukr means giving thanks for the incessant divine blessings which have been .showered upon us and our family

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "Whenever you remember a blessing, place your forehead on the ground as a token of thanks and if you see that the people are looking at you, as a respect for that favor, bend a little bit."(٢)

The Holy Prophet (S) was seen dismounting a camel. He performed prostration five times and said: "Jibra'il came down to me and gave me five types of insight, and for every insight I made sajdah."(٣)

Hadrat 'Ali ('a) sometimes would faint while performing sujud shukr(۴) and it has been narrated from the Imam of the Time ('a) that the most necessary of the recommended acts {sunnah} is sujud shukr.(۵)

During the sujud shukr any dhikr or supplication is permissible, but the recital of "shukran lillah"

١- The subjects of this discussion have been recorded in the traditions of the book, .Kamil az-Ziyarat, Section ٨٩ onward

٢- .Al-Wafi, vol. ٨, p. ٨٢۵

٣- .Muhajjah al-Bayda', vol. ١, p. ٣۴۶

۴- .Jami' al-Ahadith, vol. ۵, p. ۴۵٩

۵- .Jami' al-Ahadith, vol. ۵, p. ۴۵٣

thanks to Allah} and "al-hamdulillah" {all praise belongs to Allah}, and remembrance} of the great blessing of the guardianship {wilayah} of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are recommended.(١) God said: "The reward of the person who performs sujud shukr is that I also give thanks to him."(٢)

Although there is a specific time and place for sujud shukr, the best time nevertheless

.is after every prayer as a supplement to the prayer

The blessings of sujud shukr

Many blessings and benefits of sujud shukr have been mentioned in the traditions. We :shall briefly state some of them below

If there is deficiency in prayer which is not removed through the recommended and optional prayers, sujud shukr will compensate for it. It entails the pleasure of God and removes the distance between man and God. Supplication during the sujud shukr is .recommended and has the reward of ten salawats and the removal of ten major sins

Concerning the station and status of sujud shukr, it is enough to say that God would (be proud of it and express this pride to the angels.(۳

The prostrations of the saints of God

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "The reason behind Ibrahim's ('a) attainment of the station (of Friend of Allah {khalilullahi} was his many prostrations on the ground.(۴

On the night when Hadrat 'Ali ('a) was supposed to sleep on the bed of the Holy Prophet (S) in order to protect him from the swords of his enemies, he asked the Messenger of Allah (S): "If I do so, will your life be safe from danger?" When the Prophet (S) gave an

---

.Jami' al-Ahadith, vol. ۵, p. ۴۶۹ -۱

.Al-Faqih, vol. ۱, p. ۳۳۴ -۲

.Al-Faqih, vol. ۱, p. ۳۳۱ -۳

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۵, p. ۱۶۳ -۴

affirmative reply, Hadrat 'Ali ('a) smiled and performed sujud shukr as a gesture of (gratitude for this opportunity.(۱

When the head of Abu Jahl, leader of the polytheists, was brought to the Prophet (S),

(he performed sujud shukr.(۲

Imam as-Sajjad ('a) would perform sujud shukr as an expression of thanks. Whenever a calamity was taken away from him or he initiated the reconciliation between two Muslims, he would make sujud shukr. His sujud was so long that he (would perspire profusely.(۳

Some points

The place of prostration is so important in that we thus read in the traditions: "After .۱ prayer, touch the place of prostration with your hand and apply it to your face and (body in order to remain safe from diseases, plagues and unpleasant things."(۴

Try not to forget sujud shukr after the maghrib {dusk} prayer as the supplication .۲ (after it is accepted.(۵

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "Anyone who performs prostration between the adhan and iqamah and thus says while in prostration, "I do prostrate before You humbly, submissively and meekly," God will place love for him in the hearts of the believers (and fear of him in the hearts of the hypocrites {munafiqin}.(۶

Prostration is solely for God and it is not permissible to prostrate before anyone .۳ including the Prophet of Allah (S),(۷) let alone in front of the graves of the Imams ('a) and their descendants {imamzadehs}, in front of which some people do prostrate as .an expression of respect

When a group of Muslims migrated to Abyssinia, the infidels

.Al-Wafi, vol. ۸, p. ۸۸۲ -۱
.Jami' al-Ahadith, vol. ۵, p. ۴۷۵ -۲
.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۵, p. ۱۳۷ -۳
.Safinah al-Bahar -۴
.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, p. ۱۰۵۸ -۵

.Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۴, p. ۶۳۳ -۶

.Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۴, p. ۹۸۶ -۷

of Mecca dispatched a delegation to King Negus in order for him not to accommodate the Muslims in his country and thus expel them. In accordance with the customs at that time, the representative of the Quraysh prostrated before the Negus (king of Abyssinia). On the contrary, the Muslim representative, Ja‘far, the brother of Hadrat ‘Ali (‘a), did not prostrate, saying: “We do not prostrate to anybody except God.”(۱)

The prostration of Hadrat Ya‘qub (Jacob) (‘a) and his sons to Hadrat Yusuf (Joseph) (‘a) was also not for Yusuf but for God as a token of gratitude for the blessing of reunion with Yusuf: “And they fell down prostrate before him.”(۲)

Dhikr at-Tasbih

{Subhan Allah” {glory be to Allah“

.While in ruku‘ and sujud, the person praying glorifies God

When the verse, “So celebrate the Name of your Lord, the All-supreme,”(۳) was :revealed, the Prophet (S) thus said: “Apply this command to your ruku‘ and say

سُبْحانَ رَبِّیَ الْعَظیمِ وَ بِحَمدِهِ

.Subhana rabbiya’l-‘azim wa bihamdih

”.Glory be to my Lord, the Great, and praise belongs to Him“

And when the verse, “You are laboring toward your Lord, the Most Exalted,”(۴) was :revealed, he (S) said: “Apply this command to your sujud and say

سُبْحانَ رَبِّیَ الاَعْلی وَ بِحَمدِهِ

.Subhana rabbiya’l-a‘la wa bihamdih

Glory be to my Lord, the Exalted, and praise belongs to Him.”(۵)“

The station of tasbih

Glorifying {tasbih} and exalting {tanziyyah} God are the root of all authentic Islamic :beliefs and thoughts

Tawhid means regarding God as free from any taint of polytheism: "Clear is Allah of any partners that they may ascribe

p: ۱۳۴

۱- Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, vol. ۱, p. ۴۶۱.

۲- Surah Yusuf ۱۲:۱۰۰.

۳- Surah al-Waqi'ah ۵۶:۷۴.

۴- Surah al-A'la ۸۷:۱.

۵- Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. ۱۹, p. ۱۶۰.

{to Him}!"(۱)

Justice {'adl} means considering God as free from any form of injustice: "They said, 'Immaculate is our Lord! We have indeed been wrongdoers!'"(۲)

Prophethood {nubuwwah} and Imamate {imamah} mean treating God as immune from the lack of the purpose, the program and the means delivering the people from :the sea of desire and inclination

(وَ مَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِذْ قَالُوا مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلى بَشَرٍ مِّن شَيْ ءٍ)

"They did not regard Allah with the regard due to Him when they said, 'Allah has not sent down anything to any human'."(۳)

The Return {ma'ad} means knowing God not to have made creation in vain and :knowing that the end of the world is not annihilation

"O Lord, You have not created this in vain! Immaculate are You!"(۴)

"Did you suppose that We created you aimlessly, and that you will not be brought back to Us?"(۵)

.Yes, God is guiltless of this futile and vain act

Glorification of God is not only the fountainhead of Islamic beliefs but also the source :of enormous spiritual and moral excellences

Subhan Allah is the source of satisfaction {rida}. If we regard Him as free from any defect, it means that we are satisfied with His decrees and submit to the wisdom .behind His will

Subhan Allah is the fountainhead of tawakkul {reliance on God}. It is only logical that we have to trust and rely on the One who is free from any need and immune from any weakness and inability: "Immaculate

---

۱- ۵۲:۴۳ Surah at-Tur.
۲- ۶۸:۲۹ Surah al-Qalam.
۳- ۶:۹۱ Surah al-An'am.
۴- ۳:۱۹۱ Surah Al 'Imran.
۵- ۲۳:۱۱۵ Surah al-Mu'minun.

(is He! He is the All-sufficient."(۱

Subhan Allah is the source of love for God. The Essence that is clear from any defect .and shortcoming is loved by man

Subhan Allah is the preliminary part of praise and eulogy to God—praise and eulogy for the Essence that is free from filth and unpleasantness. Thus, in the Tasbihat al-Arba'ah,(۲) "subhan Allah" comes first before "al-hamdulillah."

Subhan Allah is the key to salvation from all superstitions and man-made creeds: (“Clear is Allah, the Lord of the Throne, of what they allege {concerning Him}.”(۳

Perhaps, it is for these reasons that the command for tasbih {glorification of Allah} has been mentioned more frequently compared to other adhkar {forms of

remembrance to God}. The command for tasbih has been repeated ۱۶ times; for istighfar {asking forgiveness from Allah} eight times; for the remembrance of Allah {dhikr} five times; and for takbir {to say, "Allahu akbar"} twice. Besides, the command for tasbih is meant for all times and conditions so that man should always remember :God and regard Him as free from any form of defect and shortcoming

(وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا وَمِنْ آنَاءِ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْ وَأَطْرَافَ النَّهَارِ)

And celebrate the praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before the" (sunset, and glorify Him in watches of the night and at the day's ends."(۴

You also glorify God at the moment of victory and joyfulness: "When Allah's help (comes with victory... then celebrate the praise of your Lord."(۵

In addition, glorify God

۱- Surah Yunus ۱۰:۶۸.

۲- Tasbihat al-Arba'ah: literally, the four tasbihs; it refers to the recital of "Subhan Allahi wa'l-hamdulillahi wa la ilaha illallahu Allahu akbar" {Glory be to Allah; praise be {.to Allah; there is no god but Allah; Allah is greater}. {Trans

۳- Surah al-Anbiya' ۲۱:۲۲.

۴- Surah Ta Ha ۲۰:۱۳۰.

۵- Surah an-Nasr ۱۱۰:۱, ۳.

in the depths of vicissitudes and adversity for the tasbih is the source of deliverance: "And had he (Jonah) not been one of those who celebrate Allah's glory, he would have (surely remained in its belly till the day they will be resurrected."(۱

Yes, on account of man's many limitations, he can never comprehend God. So, it is better for him to admit his own weakness and say, "As You are beyond the scope of the intellect and imagination, You are guiltless of and above what others ascribe to (You": "Immaculate is He, and greatly exalted above what they say!"(۲

Only the sincere servants of God, through divine guidance and succor, can describe God:

(سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ إِلا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ)

"Clear is Allah of whatever they allege {about Him},—{all} except Allah's exclusive servants."(٣)

The reward for tasbih

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (S) said that when a servant of God utters, "Subhan Allah," whatever is under the Divine Throne glorifies God along with him and ١٠ times the reward shall be given to him. When he recites, "Al-hamdulillah," God shall grant him the blessings of the world till he meets Allah and enters into the blessings of the hereafter.(٤)

Practical tasbih

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said: "One of the most difficult and important things that God has made necessary for creation is "abundant remembrance" {dhikr al-kathir}." He ('a) then said: "What it means is not the recital of "Subhan Allahi wa'l-hamdulillahi wa la ilaha illallahu Allahu akbar" {Glory be to Allah; praise

---

١- Surah as-Saffat ٣٧:١۴٣-١۴۴.
٢- Surah al-Isra' (or Bani Isra'il) ١٧:۴٣.
٣- Surah as-Saffat ٣٧:١۵٩-١۶٠.
۴- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ٧, p. ١٨٧.

be to Allah; there is no god but Allah; Allah is greater} although it is also part of them. What it means is 'to remember Allah as to what is lawful {halal} and what is unlawful {haram}'."(١)

That is, to remember God when acting; if a certain task means obedience to Him, it

.has to be undertaken; if it earns His displeasure, it has to be abandoned

Repetition of tasbih

Someone came to the house of Imam as-Sadiq ('a). He saw the Imam ('a) in a state of ruku'glorifying God and repeating the tasbih ۶۰ times. While in the state of sujud, the (Imam repeated the tasbih ۵۰۰ times.(۲

The repetition of tasbih is discussed not only in prayer but in the Hajj rites as well. At the time of looking at the Black Stone {hajar al-aswad}, during the sa'i between Safa .and Marwah, and in other cases, the repetition of tasbih has been recommended

For instance, in the prayer, apart from the dhikr in ruku' and sujud, Tasbihat al-Arba'ah can also be repeated in the third and fourth rak'ahs. Based on both Sunni and Shi'ah traditions, what is meant by the baqiyat as-salihat {"lasting righteous deeds"}(۳) in verse ۴۶ of Surah al-Kahf is this Tasbihat al-Arba'ah.(۴) As stated by Hadrat 'Ali ('a), the dhikr of Hadrat Ibrahim ('a) at the time of constructing the Ka'bah (was "Subhan Allahi wa'l-hamdulillahi wa la ilaha illallahu Allahu akbar".(۵

Remembrance of God {dhikr Allah} in Islamic culture

:Let us take a brief look at the remembrance of God {dhikr Allah} in Islamic culture

When surprised and amazed, our

.Al-Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۸۰ -۱
.Al-Wafi, vol. ۲, p. ۱۰۷ -۲
Surah al-Kahf ۱۸:۴۶: "Wealth and children are an adornment of the life of the world, -۳ ".but lasting righteous deeds are better with your Lord in reward and better in hope
.Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. ۱۳, p. ۵۴۰ -۴
.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, p. ۱۲۰۷ -۵

faithful ancestors would say: "Masha' Allah" {what Allah has willed!} or "subhan Allah"

{glory be to Allah!}; when entering the house: "Ya Allah" {O Allah!}; when separating from each other: "Khoda hafiz" {may God protect (you)!}; when standing: "Ya 'Ali!" {O 'Ali!}; to remove fatigue while working: "Khoda quwwat" {may God give you power!}; in reply to the inquiry after one's health: "Al-hamdulillah" {All praise belongs to Allah}; when offering food: "Bismillah" {In the Name of Allah!}; and at the end of a meal, they .would recite appropriate prayers and thanks to God

Grandmothers would start their storytelling: "Yeki bud; yeki nabud" {There was once .{nobody except Him

It is clear that to live in such an atmosphere and to be reared in such an environment would encourage the remembrance of God to flow in the heart and His Name to flow .from the tongue at any time and in any place

The tasbih of other creatures

All of creation—the seven heavens and the earth and whatever there is between them—glorifies God.(۱) The animals such as the birds, inanimate objects such as the mountains,(۲) thunder and storm(۳) do so and that too is out of consciousness and !instinct

(كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُ وَتَسْبِيحَهُ)

(Each knows his prayer and glorification."(۴"

The tasbih of the angels is so pervasive that the Prophet (S) said: "There is not a single layer of the heavens except that therein is an angel in the state of prayer and (tasbih."(۵

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "Whenever Hadrat Dawud ('a) would read the

---

Surah al-Jum'ah ۶۲:۱: "Whatever there is in the heavens glorifies Allah and - ۱ whatever there is in the earth, the Sovereign, the All-holy, the All-mighty, the All-

".wise

٢ - Surah al-Anbiya' ٢١:٧٩: "And We disposed the mountains and the birds to glorify {Him} with David, and We have been the doer {of such things}."

٣- Surah ar-Ra'd ١٣:١٣: "The Thunder celebrates His praise."

٤- Surah an-Nur ٢٤:٤١.

٥- Tafsir al-Qurtubi, vol. ٨, p. ٥٥٨١.

Zabur, there was no mountain, stone and bird that did not recit it with him."(١)

In the traditions, we are admonished not to strike a blow on the face of four-footed animals for they are glorifying God.(٢)

گر تو را از غیب چشمی باز شد

با تو ذرّات جهان همراز شد

نطق آب و نطق خاک و نطق گل

هست محسوس حواس اهل دل

جمله ذرّات عالم در نهان

با تو می گویند روزان و شبان

ما سمیعیم و بصیریم و هوشیم

با شما نامحرمان ما خاموشیم

If you could see the unseen, to you would be revealed the secret behind every particle of the world.

The voice of water, soil and mud can be heard by the gnostics.

All the particles of the world say secretly to you during the day and night:

"We are hearing, discerning and vigilant. We are silent with you the strangers."

A group of chirping sparrows passed by in front of Imam as-Sajjad ('a). The Imam ('a)

turned to those who were near him and said: “Every morning the birds glorify Allah (and pray for power for the day.”(۳

Some people have said that what is meant by the tasbih and sujud of other creatures is allegorical and not literal. Just as a beautiful painting and a collection of poems respectively testify to the enormous talent of the painter and the inborn disposition of the poet, the mysterious constitution of other creatures bears witness to the knowledge, power, wisdom, and precision of God, declaring Him immune from any sort of defect and shortcoming. This is the very meaning

---

.Tafsir Nur ath-Thaqalayn, vol. ۳, p. ۴۴۴ -۱

.Tafsir Nur ath-Thaqalayn, vol. ۳, p. ۱۶۸ -۲

.Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. ۱۳, p. ۲۰۶ -۳

.of the tasbih of other creatures

This view is put forward when, in the first place, we have no proof and evidence substantiating this notion. Secondly, we have to resort to allegorical interpretation {ta'wil} and analysis when the apparent meaning of a word poses an impossibility such as the verse, “The hand of Allah is above their hands,”(۱) in which it is impossible for God to have a hand and so we say that what is meant by “the hand of Allah” is divine power. However, in case where we cannot comprehend the meaning, we have .no right to resort to allegorical interpretation

,How could we resort to allegorical interpretation when the Qur'an itself says

(وَ إِن مِّن شیْ ءٍ إِلا یُسبِّحُ بحَمْدِهِ وَ لَکِن لا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسبِیحَهُمْ)

There is not a thing but celebrates His praise, but you do not understand their“ (glorification”?(۲

,How could we resort to allegorical interpretation when the Qur'an declares

"And you have not been given of the knowledge except a few {of you}"(۳)?

We read many times in the Qur'an that the Prophet (S) who has access to eternal knowledge, said: "I do not know."(۴) So what if we also say, "We do not know" and "We do not understand"?

What is interesting is that God has explicitly declared to us our ignorance and lack of knowledge: "But you do not understand their glorification."(۵) But the proud man is not ready to say: "I do not understand the secret of creation among which is the tasbih of other

---

۱- Surah al-Fath ۴۸:۱۰.

۲- Surah al-Isra' (or Bani Isra'il) ۱۷:۴۴.

۳- Surah al-Isra' (or Bani Isra'il) ۱۷:۸۵.

۴- This sentence was repeated four times in the Qur'an among which is in Surah al-Anbiya' ۲۱:۱۰۹.

۵- Surah al-Isra' (or Bani Isra'il) ۱۷:۴۴.

creatures.

Does not the Qur'an categorically disclose that the hoopoe was aware of the sun-worshipping practice of the people of Sheba and reported the same to Hadrat Sulayman ('a), saying: "The ruler of Sheba is a woman who is sitting on a large throne and her people are worshipping the sun.(۱)

The hoopoe's knowledge of the peculiarities of the environment and the name of the land, and its ability to distinguish woman from man, ruler from subject, polytheism from monotheism, and the like are all signs of the intelligence of other creatures.

Does not the Qur'an say that one of the ants said to the others,

"Enter your dwellings, lest Solomon and his hosts should trample on you while they are unaware"?(۲)

In these verses, understanding the movement of human beings, their names (Solomon), their occupation (military), their inattention to where they step, and the ant's concern for the other ants are among the issues that makes us aware of the .capacity and power of discernment of other creatures

Now, if we accept the existence of instinct as we have to accept the text of the Qur'an, then there is no more need to justify and analyze the tasbih of other .creatures

Qunut

point

The word "qunut" means obedience accompanied by humility. For example, while addressing Hadrat Maryam (Mary), God says: "O Mary, be obedient {uqnuti} to your Lord."(۳) What is meant by qunut in prayer is the supplication that we recite in the .second rak'ah of every prayer

On the interpretation of

.Surah an-Naml ۲۷:۲۲-۲۷ -۱

.Surah an-Naml ۲۷:۱۸ -۲

.Surah Al 'Imran ۳:۴۳ -۳

the verse, "And dedicate yourself to Him with total dedication,"(۱) Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says that what is meant by "tabattul" is to raise the hands in supplication during (prayer.(۲) The word "tabattul" means cutting off hope in other than God.(۳

The Qur'an thus enjoins us: "Supplicate your Lord, beseechingly and secretly."(۴) One of the signs of beseeching and weeping in the presence of God is to raise the hands in supplication.(۵) The indigent man stretches his hands toward the Absolute All-.sufficient, praying to Him alone and purges his heart of other than Him

Although qunut is only optional {mustahabb} in prayer, it has, nevertheless, been

given such attention that Imam ar-Rida ('a) thus wrote in one of his letters to Ma'mun: "Qunut is an obligatory sunnah in all the daily prayers."(۶) Of course, the purpose of the Imam ('a) is to emphasize the importance of qunut. For example, if one forgets to perform it before the ruku', it is recommended to perform a compensatory one after ruku', and if he remembers it during sujud, he may also do so after salam.

Concerning the etiquette of performing qunut, it is thus recorded: You have to raise your hands up to the level of your face; the palms of the hands must be open toward the sky; the two hands must be kept together; the fingers must be close together except the thumbs; at the time of reciting the supplication, you have to look at the palms of the hands and recite it

---

۱- Surah al-Muzzammil ۷۳:۸.
۲- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, p. ۹۱۲.
۳- Mufradat ar-Raghib.
۴- Surah al-A'raf ۷:۵۵.
۵- Ma'ani as-Saduq, p. ۳۶۹.
۶- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۲, p. ۱۹۷.

loudly; of course, not to the extent that the leader of the congregation would hear it.(۱)

There is no specific supplication and one may recite whatever supplication one wants. It is also not necessary that the supplication be recited in Arabic as it may also be recited in English. Of course, it is clear that the Qur'anic supplications and the supplications that the Infallibles ('a) read in their qunut have special virtue and preeminence.

The qunut of different prayers

The number of qunut is not identical in all prayers. Each of the five daily prayers has one qunut before the ruku' of the second rak'ah. But the Friday congregational prayer

which has two rak'ahs have two qunuts, one before the ruku' of the first rak'ah and .the other one after the ruku' of the second rak'ah

In the 'Id al-Fitr and 'Id al-Qurban prayers each of which has two rak'ahs, we recite nine qunuts; five successive qunuts before the ruku' of the first rak'ah and four successive qunuts before the ruku' of the second rak'ah. Of course, there is a special .supplication recorded for these qunuts

Even in the salah al-ayat {prayer of natural signs} which has two rak'ahs and five ruku's in every rak'ah, it is recommended to recite the qunut before the second, fourth, sixth, and eight ruku's, though it is enough to have one qunut before the tenth .'ruku

The witr prayer, which is a one-rak'ah prayer performed at the end of the night ,supererogatory prayers, has a long qunut and many recorded supplications

---

۱- Masa'il-e Qunut dar Tawdih al-Masa'il.

such as istighfar {to say, for example, "astaghfirullah"} ۷۰ times, "al-'afwu" ۳۰۰ times .and supplication for ۴۰ believers

The prayer for rain, like the 'Id prayers, has five qunuts in the first rak'ah and four .qunuts in the second rak'ah

In any case, to prolong the qunut is recommended. Abu Dharr asked the Prophet (S): "Which prayer is better?" The Prophet (S) replied: "The prayer whose qunut is longer and anyone who would recite his qunut longer will have more comfort during the time (of the Day of Resurrection."(۱

(The qunut of the Infallibles ('a

Ibn Mas'ud said that the reason behind his acceptance of Islam was his witnessing the prayer of three persons, viz. the Holy Prophet (S), Hadrat 'Ali ('a) and Hadrat

(Khadijah (r).(2)

In the salam that we give in the Ziyarah Al Ya Sin to Hadrat al-Mahdi (may Allah, the Exalted, expedite his glorious advent), we read: "Peace be upon you when you are standing for prayer and qunut!"

For each of the Infallibles ('a), there has been recorded long supplications in the qunut, which we cannot quote here for lack of space. It is surprising that the qunut with all its blessings is not widely and frequently practiced. Were Hadrat 'Ali and the Khulafa' ar-Rashidun not reciting qunut in their prayers?

During qunut we should not think of ourselves and our requests only. We have to learn from Hadrat Zahra who said: "al-jaru thumma 'd-dar."(3)

That is, "Think of your neighbor first and then your family." God has promised to grant the personal requests of anyone who

---

1- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٨٢, p. ٢٠٠.

2- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٣٨, p. ٢٨٠.

3- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۴٣, p. ٨١.

would pray for others.

In the qunut we have to pray against our enemies, asking for the victory of Islam and the Muslims.

In his qunut the Holy Prophet (S) would curse a group of people, mentioning their names and descriptions. In the qunut of his prayer, Hadrat 'Ali ('a) used to curse Mu'awiyah and 'Amru ibn al-'As.(1) At any rate, tawalla and tabarra are part of the religion, nay the foundation of our religion:

هَل الدِّين إِلاَّ الْحُبّ وَ الْبُغْض؟

"Is the religion other than love and hatred?"(2)

Tashahhud and Salam

Tashahhud

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لاَ إِلَٰهَ إِلاّ الله وَ أَشَهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّداً عَبْدُهُ وَ رَسُولُه، أَللّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّد.

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His servant and .Messenger.O Allah! Send blessings on Muhammad and his progeny

Among the obligatory parts of prayer is tashahhud which is recited in the second and last rak'ahs of prayer. In the tashahhud we testify and bear witness to the Oneness of Allah and the apostleship {risalah} of His Prophet, Hadrat Muhammad (S). Although we have testified again and again to these two facts in the adhan and iqamah, those testimonies were at the time of the approach of the prayer and this testimony is at .the end of the prayer

There is wisdom behind all these repetitions. It is because man is easily subjected to negligence and forgetfulness, easily forgetting the Owner of the blessings. These sentences are like a rope that protects the ship of humanity from the waves

---

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۲, p. ۲۰۱ -۱

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۶۸, p. ۶۳ -۲

.of events

The slogan of tawhid

.(La ilaha illallah" is the first slogan of all the prophets ('a"

La ilaha illallah" is the testimony that all those who possess knowledge along with the" :angels do acknowledge

(شهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لا إِلَهَ إِلا هُوَ وَ الْمَلائكَهُ وَ أُولُوا الْعِلْمِ)

Allah bears witness that there is no god but Him—and {so do} the angels and those"

(who possess knowledge."(1)

La ilaha illallah" is the sentence that every Muslim hears at birth, with which he will be" .{buried and which will be recited at his grave {talqin

La ilaha illallah" is the most beloved of sentences to God and the heaviest of deeds on" (the Scale.(2)

La ilaha illallah" is the formidable fortress of God in which whoever enters is safe" :from His wrath

La ilaha illa'llah is My fortress; so, whoever enters My fortress is safe from My" (wrath."(3)

La ilaha illallah" is the demarcation between kufr and Islam. Any unbeliever {kafir}" who recites it enters the fold of Islam. The Prophet (S) criticized the Muslim who did not pay attention to one of the enemy soldiers when the latter recited "la ilaha illallah" and killed him, saying: "With the utterance of this statement, anyone is safe even (though we do not know whether he does so sincerely or not."(4)

La ilaha illallah" is the slogan of the Muslims at the time of passing the Sirat on the" (Day of Resurrection.(5)

We read in history that Abu Jahl said to the Prophet (S): "Shall we abandon the ۳۶۰ idols and accept

---

.Surah Al 'Imran ۳:۱۸ -۱

".Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۹۳, "Bab at-Tahlil wa Fadlah -۲

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۳, p. ۱۳ -۳

It refers to Surah an-Nisa' ۴:۹۴: "Do not say to someone who offers you peace, 'You -۴ ".'are not a believer

.Jami' al-Ahadith, vol. ۱, p. ۱۸۸ -۵

One God? We are willing to utter ۱۰ sentences but not this statement." But the Prophet

(S) said: “It is this statement that will give you glory and power and will give you superiority over other communities.”(1)

A glance at the Du‘a’ al-‘Arafah of Imam al-Husayn (‘a) and the sermon of Imam as-Sajad (‘a) at Sham makes the fact clear that the saints of God wholeheartedly bore witness to this, and even the earth and time gave this testimony.

In the tashahhud we do not suffice ourselves with merely “la ilaha illallah”. We rather add, “wahdahu la sharikalah” “He is alone who has no partner”. That is, He is One who has no partner in creation, in control and in legislation: “wa lam yaku’l-lahu sharika fi’l-mulk” “And He has no partner in sovereignty.” Servitude to God is the highest honor for the saints of God:

اِلٰهی كَفیٰ بی عِزّاً اَنْ اَكُونَ لَكَ عَبْداً

“O Lord! It is already enough of an honor for me that I am Your servant.”(2)

Servitude to God implies man’s freedom from all forms of restriction, attachment and affection. It thus gives man so much power that he would not be afraid of any superpower. On account of being a sincere servant of God, the wife of Pharaoh became such an impenetrable force that all of Pharaoh’s gold and silver had no effect on her, and although Pharaoh subjected all to his service, she remained the servant of God alone. Her accomplishment was such that she became a model for

---

۱- Faraz-ha’i az Tarikh-e Islami {Highlights of Islamic History}, p. ۱۱۱.

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۷, p. ۴۰۲.

all believing men and women throughout history:

(وَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلاً لِّلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا امْرَأَه فِرْعَوْنَ)

“Allah draws an {other} example for those who have faith: the wife of Pharaoh.”(1)

In any case, testimony to the Prophet's (S) servanthood {'ubudiyyah} to God is a preliminary to the testimony of his apostleship {risalah}, and this itself has lessons .”...and messages: “Ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduh

Testimony to his apostleship means the negation of all man-made schools; acceptance of the eternality and universality of the apostleship of the Seal of the .Prophets {khatam al-anbiya'}; and rejection of all the taghuts

Testimony to the apostleship of Hadrat Muhammad (S) is a covenant that God has made with the all the prophets; had they not accepted his apostleship, they would not have attained the station of prophethood.(۲) Therefore, I am not alone in saying, “Ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasulah” as all the prophets ('a) have said .so as well

Pristine Tawhid

What has afflicted most of monotheists nowadays is that they verbally utter, “La ilaha illallah” but in practice they turn to other than Him, looking for power and glory .somewhere else. They obey other than Him and express love to other than Him

By the way, polytheism is itself a grave act of injustice and disrespect for His Sacred Essence: “Polytheism is indeed a great injustice.”(۳) It is so because having a partner connotes weakness, impotence and the inability to act, as well as the existence of a similar and equal being—things which are inconceivable with

---

۱- Surah at-Tahrim ۶۶:۱۱.

۲- Surah Al 'Imran ۳:۸۱: “When Allah took a compact concerning the prophets, {He said,} 'Inasmuch as I have given you of the Book and wisdom, should an apostle come to you thereafter confirming what is with you, you shall believe in him and help him.' He said, 'Do you pledge and accept My covenant on this condition?' They said, 'We pledge.' He said, 'Then be witnesses, and I am also among the witnesses along with you.'”

.Surah Luqman ۳۱:۱۳ -۳

.respect to God

Testimony to the Apostleship

Wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasuluh" "And I bear witness that" ".Muhammad is His servant and Messenger

Servitude {'ubuddiyyah} is the highest station of the prophets ('a). Indeed, it is the ."preliminary stage of apostleship and prophethood: "'abduhu wa rasulah

It is servitude to God that brings the Prophet (S) to the ascension {mi'raj}: "Immaculate is He who carried His servant on a journey"(۱) and it causes the heavenly revelation to descend upon him: "We have sent down (the revelation through angels) (to Our servant."(۲

God also praises His prophets ('a) for their servitude to Him. Regarding Hadrat Nuh (Noah) ('a), He says: "Indeed he was a grateful servant,"(۳) and concerning Hadrat (Sulayman (Solomon) ('a) He states: "What an excellent servant!"(۴

One of the distinctions of the prophets ('a) in relation to the geniuses and inventors is that the latter have obtained their genius and creativity as the result of intelligence, perseverance and exercise, while the prophets ('a) have acquired their miracles as a result of servitude to God and under the aegis of the divine grace, and servitude is the .(foundation of all the stations of the prophets ('a

Acknowledgment of the servanthood of the prophets ('a) prevents any form of extremism, fanaticism and radicalism concerning the stations of the saints of God. It .reminds us that the Prophet (S), though the best of creation, is also a servant of God

It is needless to say that this testimony must be based on sincerity and truthfulness for, the

.Surah al-Isra’ (or Bani Isra’il) ١٧:١ -١
.Surah al-Baqarah ٢:٢٣ -٢
.Surah al-Isra’ (or Bani Isra’il) ١٧:٣ -٣
.Surah Sad ٣٨:٣٠ -۴

hypocrites {munafiqin} used to testify also to the apostleship of the Prophet (S) yet :the Qur’an thus reveals about them

(إِذَا جَاءکَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ قَالُوا نَشْهَدُ إِنَّکَ لَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّکَ لَرَسُولُهُ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَكَاذِبُونَ)

When the hypocrites come to you they say, ‘We bear witness that you are indeed the“ apostle of Allah.’ Allah knows that you are indeed His Apostle, and Allah bears witness (that the hypocrites are indeed liars.”(١

Salawat

Allahumma salli ‘ala Muhammad wa ali Muhammad.” “O Allah! Send blessings on“ ”.Muhammad and his progeny

After bearing witness to tawhid and the risalah, we invoke blessings for Muhammad .(and his progeny (‘a

Salawat is the symbol of love {muhabbah}, friendship {muwaddah} and devotion to the family of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S), which the Qur’an regards as the reward (for the apostleship of the Prophet (S).(٢

Salawat is the polish for man’s rusty soul(٣) and it wipes away hypocrisy {nifaq}.(۴) Salawat is a factor in wiping away sins,(۵) a means for opening the gates of heaven,(۶) the reason behind the angels’ supplication for man and asking for the forgiveness of his sins,(٧) and a means of proximity to the Prophet (S) on the Day of Resurrection and (the obtainment of his intercession {shafa‘ah}.(٨

(The one who has blissful fate is he whose last statement in the world is salawat.(٩

God initially sends blessings {salawat} to the Prophet (S) and then orders us to send :salawat

(إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ

.Surah al-Munafiqun ۶۳:۱ -۱

Surah ash-Shura ۴۲:۲۳: “Say, I do not ask of you any reward for it except the - ۲ ”.affection for {my} relatives

.Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۴, p. ۱۲۱۶ -۳

.Al-Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۴۹۲ -۴

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۹۴, p. ۵۴ -۵

.Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۴, p. ۱۲۲۰ -۶

.Mir‘ah al-‘Uqul, vol. ۱۲, p. ۱۰۹ -۷

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۹۴, p. ۶۳ -۸

.Wasa’il ash-Shi‘ah, vol. ۴, p. ۱۲۱۶ -۹

وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا)

Indeed Allah and His angels bless the Prophet. O you who have faith! Invoke“)blessings on him and invoke Peace upon him in a worthy manner.”(۱

From this verse and the following traditions, we have obtained these points below :regarding salawat

Salawat is a verbal gesture of respect, but what is more important is the practical .۱ .”obedience required as is indicated by the phrase, “sallimu taslima

The salawat of God and the angels is permanent—“yusallun” in the present perfect .۲ .tense

The salawat of God is nobility {kiramah}; the salawat of the angels is mercy .۳ .{’{rahmah}; and the salawat of the people is supplication {du‘a

It is recorded in the traditions: “In addressing Hadrat Musa (‘a), God said, ‘Send .۴ salawat upon Muhammad and his progeny as I and the angels do send salawat upon)him’.”(۲

۵. The Messenger of Allah (S) said: “To remember God is a form of worship and to remember me is also a form of worship, and the same is true with respect to my successor ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib.”(۳)

۶. It is recorded in the traditions: “For the acceptance of your supplication, send salawat first before supplicating.”(۴) Not only the sending of salawat upon hearing the name of the Prophet (S) but also writing it after his name has reward. The Prophet (S) said: “The angels are praying for the forgiveness of anyone who would send salawat to me in his book so long as my name exists in that book.”

The manner of sending salawat

In the main books

۱- Surah al-Ahzab ۳۳:۵۶.
۲- Tafsir Nur ath-Thaqalayn, vol. ۴, p. ۳۰۵.
۳- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۹۴, p. ۶۹.
۴- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۹۴, p. ۶۴.

of the Ahl as-Sunnah, it is narrated that at the time of sending salawat, the progeny of Muhammad (S) should definitely be mentioned along with his name otherwise one’s salawat is incomplete {abtar} and defective.(۱)

In the Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, it is narrated from the Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Tirmidhi, Sunan Nisa’i, Sunan Abu Dawud, and Sunan Ibn Majah, which are among the most important Sunni books, that someone asked the Prophet (S): “We know how to greet you {salam}, but how should we send blessings to you?” The Prophet (S) said: “You say,

أَللّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّد كَما صَلَّيْتَ عَلىٰ إِبْراهيم وَ آلِ إِبْراهيم إِنَّكَ حَميدٌ مَجيدٌ.

“O Allah! Send blessings on Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad as You have sent blessings on Ibrahim and the progeny of Ibrahim. You are the Praiseworthy and

(Holy."(2)

Imam ash-Shafi'i, the imam of the Shafi'i school of Sunni jurisprudence, expresses :this issue in the following poem

يا أَهْلَ بَيْتِ رَسولِ اللهِ حُبُّكُمُ

فَرْضٌ مِنَ اللهِ فی الْقُرْآنِ أَنْزَلَه

كَفاكُمْ مِنْ عَظيمِ الْقَدْرِ أَنَّكُم

مَنْ لَمْ يُصَلِّ عَلَيْكُمْ فَلا صَلوهَ لَه

O members of the Household {Ahl al-Bayt} of the Messenger of Allah! Loving you is an .obligation, which God has revealed in the Qur'an

On the greatness and loftiness of your station, it is enough that anyone who does not invoke blessings on you (in invoking blessings on the Prophet (S)), it is as if he has not (invoked blessings at all.(3)

Yes, remembering Muhammad's progeny in every prayer indicates that after the Prophet (S) we have

---

۱- As quoted in Tafsir-e Nemuneh, vol. ۱۷, p. ۴۲۰.
۲- As quoted in Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. ۱۶, p. ۳۶۵; Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. ۶, p. ۱۵۱.
۳- Al-Ghadir, vol. ۲, p. ۳۰۳ quoting Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, vol. ۶, p. ۳۲۳.

to refer to his Ahl al-Bayt (S) and not to others. And if it is not really so, mentioning the names of persons whose path is not necessary to tread, especially in every prayer, .would be an act of extremism

A certain person was clinging steadfastly to the Ka'bah and sending salawat but not including the progeny of Muhammad (S). Imam as-Sadiq said: "This is an act of (injustice against us."(1)

The Prophet of God (S) said: "Those who would deprive my progeny of salawat cannot smell the fragrance of paradise on the Day of Resurrection."(۲) Similarly, assemblies where the Name of God as well as that of the Prophet (S) and his progeny are not mentioned will be a source of regret on the Day of Resurrection.(۳)

It is interesting enough that it is thus recorded in the traditions: "When the name of one of the prophets of God is mentioned, send blessings first to Muhammad and his progeny, and then invoke blessings and salutation on that prophet."(۴)

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: "The real miser is he who hears my name but does not send salawat to me. He is the most unkind and unfaithful among people."(۵)

Salam

After reciting salawat, we give three types of salam {salutation}: first to the Messenger of Allah (S), second to the saints of God, and finally to the believers and our co-religionists.

In the verse, "Invoke blessings on him and invoke Peace upon him in a worthy manner,"(۶) God commands us to send salutations {salam}

۱- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, p. ۱۲۱۸.

۲- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, p. ۱۲۱۹.

۳- Al-Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۳۹۷.

۴- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۹۴, p. ۴۸.

۵- Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, p. ۱۲۲۰.

۶- Surah al-Ahzab ۳۳:۵۶.

upon the Prophet (S) after the salawat. In prayer, therefore, after the salawat we extend salams to him:

اَلسَّلامُ عَلَیْکَ اَیُّها النَّبِیُّ وَ رَحْمَهُ اللهِ وَ بَرَکاتُه!

!Assalamu ‘alayka ayyuha’n-nabiyyu wa rahmatullahi wa barakuh

”!May Allah’s peace, mercy and blessings be upon you, O Prophet“

Through the takbirah al-ihram, we detached ourselves from creation {khalq} and attached ourselves to the Creator {khaliq}. At the end of the prayer we also first convey salutation to the gem of creation, viz. the Holy Prophet (S). Then, we extend :our salutation to the righteous servants of God

اَلسَّلامُ عَلَینا وَ عَلی عِبادِ اللهِ الصّالِحینَ!

!As-salamu ‘alayna wa ‘ala ‘ibadillahi’s-salihin

”!May peace be upon us and the righteous servants of Allah“

.This salam includes all the past prophets, their successors and the infallible Imams

God also sends blessings and benediction upon His prophets (‘a): “Peace be to the apostles!”(۱) “Peace be to Noah!”(۲) “Peace be to Abraham!”(۳) “Peace be to Moses and (Aaron!”(۴

Through the salam, we attach ourselves to the righteous servants of God—an attachment and relationship which are beyond the bounds of time and space, with all .the purified and righteous ones throughout history, in all epochs and generations

Then, it is the turn of our fellow believers at the present time. We send our salams upon those who have participated in the congregation of Muslims who have been standing with us in ranks as well as upon the angels who are present in the congregation of Muslims and the two angels who are assigned to each of

---

۱- ۳۷:۱۸۱ Surah as-Saffat.

۲- ۳۷:۷۹ Surah as-Saffat.

۳- ۳۷:۱۰۹ Surah as-Saffat.

۴- ۳۷:۱۲۰ Surah as-Saffat.

:us

اَلسَّلامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَ بَرَكاتُه!

!Assalamu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakuh

”!May Allah’s peace, mercy and blessings be upon you“

We commence the prayer with the Name of God and end it with salam to the .creatures of Allah

In these salutations, the hierarchy is observed. We send our salam first upon the Messenger of Allah, then upon the prophets, the saints and the righteous, and then .the believers and followers

The physiognomy of salam

- .Salam is one of the Names of God
- .Salam is the salutation of the dwellers of paradise to one another
- .Salam is the greeting of the angels at the time of entering the paradise
- .Salam is the message of the All-merciful Lord
- .{Salam is the reception of the Night of Ordainment {laylah al-qadr
- .Salam is the first right of Muslims upon one another
- .Salam is the key to commencing any discourse or writing
- .Salam is the deed of security from every sort of fear and evil
- .Salam is the simplest good deed
- .Salam is the symbol of humility and meekness
- .Salam is the element of love and intimacy

- Salam is the expression of peace and amity.
- Salam is the first gift and present between two human beings.
- Salam is the wish for the safety of the servants of God.
- Salam is the call for world peace.
- Salam is the harbinger of hope and the bearer of joy.
- Salam is the effacer of past offenses.
- Salam is the announcement of presence and the permission to enter.
- Salam is the

p: ١۵۶

best word at the time of entrance and exit.

- Salam is a word which is light on the tongue but heavy in the scale.
- Salam is the way for the reformers to reform the society.
- Salam is the word addressed to both the dead and the living.
- Salam is the source of glory and grandeur.
- Salam is the element for earning the pleasure of God and the anger of Satan.
- Salam is the means of entrance of the divine secrets into the heart.
- Salam is the compensator for sins and the enhancer of good deeds.
- Salam is the messenger of fellowship and friendship.
- Salam is the agent that crushes vanity and egoism.
- Salam is divine courtesy.

.Salam is the reception of all that is good and wholesome •

Salam is a form of perfection the abandonment of which signifies stinginess, • .arrogance, seclusion, wrath, and the breaking of relationship ties

Salam is the cloud of mercy that we spread out over the people, and as such, we • say: "As-salamu 'alaykum" {May peace be upon you} instead of "As-salamu lakum" .{{May peace be to you

The Holy Prophet (S) used to say: "I shall never abandon the practice of greeting children in my life."(۱) Although offering salam is recommended and replying to it is obligatory, the reward of the one who first offers the salam is ۱۰ times more than that .of the one who simply replies

We read in the traditions that the one riding has to convey salam first to the one ;walking

---

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۱۶, p. ۹۸ -۱

the one standing to the one sitting; and the one arriving to those who are sitting in an :assembly.(۱) And the Qur'an thus exhorts

(وَ إِذَا حُيِّيتُم بِتَحِيَّهٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسنَ مِنهَا)

)When you are greeted with a salute, greet with a better one than it."(۲"

وَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ رَحْمَهُ اللهِ وَ بَرَكاتُه!

!May Allah's peace, mercy and blessings be upon you

Bibliography

.Qur'an

.Al-Faqih

.Al-Ghadir

.Al-Kafi

.Al-Wafi

.Bihar al-Anwar

.{Faraz-ha'i az Tarikh-e Islami {Highlights of Islamic History

.Ghurar al-Hikam

.Jami' al-Ahadith

.Kanz al-'Ummal

.Khomeini, Ruhullah Musawi. Sirr as-Salah

.Ma'ani as-Saduq

.Maqtal ash-Shams

.Masa'il-e Qunut dar Tawdih al-Masa'il

.Mir'ah al-'Uqul

.Mufradat ar-Raghib

.'Muhajjah al-Bayda

.Munajat ash-Sha'baniyyah

.Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal

.Mustadrak al-Hakim

Mustadrak al-Wasa'il

Mutahhari, Murtada. Sayri dar Sireh-ye Nabawi {A Survey of the Life Conduct of the

.{(Prophet (S

._____ .{Taharat-e Ruh {Spiritual Purification

._____ .{Wala-ha va Wilayat-ha {Master and Mastership

.Nahj al-Balaghah

.{Payambari va Hukumat {Prophethood and Governance

.Qassar al-Jamal

.Risaleh-ye Ahkam-e Imam Khomeini

.Safinah al-Bahar

.Tafsir al-Mizan

Tafsir al-Qurtubi

.Tafsir Atib al-Bayan

.Tafsir Burhan

.Tafsir Kanz ad-Daqa'iq

.Tafsir-e Nemuneh

.Tafsir Nur ath-Thaqalayn

.Tamashagah-e Raz

.Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah

.Zayd ibn 'Ali

p: ۱۵۸

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸۴, p. ۲۷۷ -۱

.Surah an-Nisa’ ۴:۸۶ -۲

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ
?Are those who know equal to those who do not know
al-Zumar: ۹

:Introduction
Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ۲۰۰۷, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto
Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field
and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace
:Our Goals are
(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-
encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-
replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-
providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable

.friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

:Address of the central office

Isfahan, Abdorazaq St, Haj Mohammad JafarAbadei Alley, Shahid Mohammad HasanTavakkoly Alley, Number plate ۱۲۹, first floor

Website: www.ghbook.ir

Email: Info@ghbook.ir

Central office Tel: ۰۹۱۳۲۰۰۰۱۰۹

۰۲۱ ـ Tehran Tel: ۸۸۳۱۸۷۲۲

Commerce and sale: ۰۹۱۳۲۰۰۰۱۰۹

Users' affairs: ۰۹۱۳۲۰۰۰۱۰۹

Introduction of the Center – Ghaemiyeh Digital Library